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Hannah More

From an engraving after the portrait painted by John Opie R.A. in 1786

HANNAH MORE

A BIOGRAPHICAL STUDY

BY ANNETTE M. B. MEAKIN

"Genius, and wit, and beauty wait
The mansions of the silent urn ;
One tender tear shall sooth her fate,
One tender line for Hannah mourn."—LANGHORNE.

CHEAPER EDITION

LONDON
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.
1919

TO
THE FRIEND
IN WHOSE HOUSE
THE AUTHOR FIRST MET WITH
HANNAH MORE
THIS VOLUME IS
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PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

SINCE the first appearance of this volume the British Public of our day has lived through times strikingly akin to those in which Hannah More made her reputation as a writer. We too have known a great war and have suffered the fear of invasion. We too have seen how a revolution in another land can shake our own, and we know what it is to have revolutionary propaganda carried on in our midst. We too have given protection and shelter to helpless refugees. In short, it is a fellow-feeling that draws the reader of 1919 to the life and writings of this noble-minded woman, who devoted all her days to the good—not of one class—but of the whole community, and whose name will be handed down to generations yet unborn as that of a benefactress of her country.

ANNETTE M. B. MEAKIN.

HOLMESDALE,
READING.
October 2nd, 1919.

PREFACE

It has not been my intention to write a biography of Hannah More. Had I wished to do so I should have discarded much of the present material and have felt it my duty to insert many passages that I have purposely omitted. My aim has been simply to present to my readers that picture of Hannah More which my researches and a careful perusal of her correspondence and works have left so vividly in my own mind.

I should like to take this opportunity of pointing out one or two errors that have crept into current accounts of my subject's life. Hannah More was not born at Stapleton, but at Fishponds, in which place a tablet has recently been put up to her memory: she was the daughter of a highly educated schoolmaster, and not, as is stated in the Historical and Descriptive Catalogue of the National Portrait Gallery, the daughter of an exciseman. The portrait in Sir Walter Armstrong's book of portraits by Raeburn which bears the name of Hannah More is that of some unknown lady; it is no more Hannah More than it is Mrs. Siddons or any other contemporary of hers whose features are familiar to the British public. Not only are the features those of a much less refined and intellectual type of woman, but the lady in question sports a huge bracelet on her right arm, whereas it was a rule with Hannah More throughout her life that she would never wear any article of jewellery that was purely ornamental.

A careful study of Hannah More's plays has led me to the opinion that there is no ground for the accusation made in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* that she borrowed her situations and phraseology from Shakespeare to an extent that would not in our day be considered justifiable.

The often-repeated statement that Hannah More was indifferent to the charms of beautiful scenery, and that she failed to appreciate ancient architecture, and antiquities generally, is so clearly refuted by her own letters that it hardly requires notice.

It has been many times asserted that Hannah More's friend and spiritual adviser, the Rev. John Newton, continued to support with his approval the horrors of the slave-trade long after he had taken Holy Orders, and even while he was Rector of St. Mary Woolnoth's in Lombard Street. More recent writers may possibly have derived this impression from some remarks in Stephen's *Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography*. Unfortunately, that brilliant writer appears to have occasionally sacrificed truth to brilliance. He says that Newton "commemorated his pursuit of the traffic without one word of apology or self-reproach." He then goes on to remark that Cowper felt an intense horror of slavery, which was not shared by his friend Newton, that the fact must have prevented a feeling of absolute sympathy between the two friends, and that "The prolonged slave-trading of John Newton, and still more his cold and phlegmatic avowal of it, has ever been the blot on his evangelical scutcheon." He winds up with the observation that posterity has as much right to condemn his memory as that of a slave-trader as to honour him as a saint! Surely if there were a shadow of truth in these cruel accusations they would

reflect not only on the sincerity of John Newton, but on that of his most intimate friends and spiritual children—William Wilberforce, William Cowper, and Hannah More. Happily, however, in the correspondence which passed between John Newton and the subject of the present study we have ample proof of the gross injustice that has been done to his memory (see, among others, p. 266 of this volume).

Hannah More's cottage, Cowslip Green, was in the parish of Blagdon, not that of Wrington, as has been stated by Charlotte Yonge. The Misses More were living in Pulteney Street, Bath, when Zachary Macaulay first called upon them in 1797 and met his future wife, not at Barley Wood, as stated by Charlotte Yonge. Barley Wood was not built till the year 1802, the year in which Lord Macaulay was born.

Hannah More's strict observance of Sunday is traceable to her Puritan ancestry, not to a Calvinistic tendency. Calvin's followers were no more strict in their observance of Sunday in those days than we find them in Switzerland to-day. As Lecky has pointed out, the promoters of the Evangelical Movement in the Church of England cordially upheld the Puritan Sunday. In fact, both the Methodists and the Evangelicals were intensely Sabbatarian, and had a deep influence on both the teaching and the customs of early nineteenth-century society in England. "No one who knows England," wrote Lecky, "will doubt that the existence of an enforced holiday primarily devoted to religious worship has contributed enormously to strengthen the moral fibre of the nation, to give depth, seriousness, and sobriety to the national character, and to save it from being wholly sunk in selfish pursuits and material aims." At the same time this clear-headed writer did not think

that an enforced rest on the seventh day should be joined to an enforced renunciation of all amusements. "Only a very small minority," he observes, "of the human race have the character and disposition that render it possible for them to spend a whole day in devotional exercises, and an attempt to force men of another type into such a life seldom fails to produce a dangerous rebound." The picture of Hannah More's mind that has been preserved to us in her writings is not one which would lead us to doubt that, had she lived in our day, she would have been one of the first to appreciate the common sense of this reasoning. She would surely have been the last person to enforce her own religious observances upon others, however dear they may have been to her own heart.

Hannah More was what we may call an elderly woman long before she became one of the shining lights of the second generation of Evangelicals, of the circle known as "the Clapham Party," and however narrow the religious views which she held in her later life may appear to some of us, she never once lost her close touch with the leaders of the broader parties of the Church of England. In all probability the narrow goodness which it is now the fashion to attribute to her may with more justice be attributed to some of her ardent admirers and followers than to herself. Mr. Roberts, her biographer, to take one instance, belonged to a much narrower group of churchmen than that with which Hannah More had identified herself.

Speaking of the Evangelicals among the laity in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, Canon Overton observes: "Hannah More was, of course, a tower of strength. She was a link between the Evangelicals of the first and second generation, and also between the

latter and the world without. . . . The reputation which this amiable lady enjoyed for piety, talents, and, it may be added, agreeableness, was extraordinary, extending far beyond the Evangelical circle. Her house at Barley Wood, where she resided with her four sisters, all of whom were her helpmates in her benevolent schemes, was really a sort of Mecca, whither pilgrims of all sorts resorted. We hear of Southey, Wordsworth, Alexander Knox, Bishop Jebb, and others, who certainly did not belong to the Evangelical school, visiting the sisters, and most of them coming away in raptures. But of course it was with the Evangelicals that she was most at home; and their expressions of respect (one might say reverence) for her personally, even apart from her writings, are most striking. . . . It is hardly too much to say that she was the most influential person—certainly the most influential lady—who lived at that time."

Bishop Jebb, writing to his daughter in 1805, said, "Get by all means *Hints for a Young Princess.* It is by far the best book which has, for a considerable time, issued from the press. The Bishop of Exeter (Preceptor to the Princess Charlotte, for whose use it has been written) declares that he has derived more information from it on the important subject next to his thoughts than from all his reading, and he is both a learned and a good man."

Why Mr. Birrell should have buried his nineteen volumes of Hannah More's works in his garden is a mystery. Surely he would have done better to present them to the London Library in St. James's Square, which only possesses a miserably incomplete edition. If the present study should ever chance to fall into this gentleman's hands he will, in all probability, hasten to open the grave and add another coffin. Let us hope

that our Cabinet Ministers of the year nineteen hundred and eleven may never have any more dangerous ghosts to lay than that of Hannah More!

When at the age of eleven I took down a handsomely bound copy of Hannah More's poetical works from a shelf in my father's library, I read *Percy* with interest, and marvelled, as I looked upon the portrait of a venerable old lady which did duty as frontispiece, that such a very old person could ever have written such a blood-thirsty play. It never occurred to my childish mind that the portrait had been painted some forty-five years after the play had been written. My recent researches have at least cleared up that difficulty. As I pen these last lines, perhaps the last that I shall ever write about Hannah More, a feeling of sadness comes over me—as though I were parting, for a time, from one who has grown very dear to me.

Pateley Bridge,
July 6th, 1911.

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HANNAH MORE

A BIOGRAPHICAL STUDY

CHAPTER I

PARENTAGE AND CHILDHOOD

"HAVE you read any of Hannah More's plays?"—was a question that I recently asked of a lady of my acquaintance, who is herself the author of more than one dramatic work.

"Hannah More write plays!" was the astonished reply. "Why, I never thought of her as anything but a very good woman!"

My friend was right as far as she went. Hannah More was, indeed, a very good woman. But she was something more than that. In the days of Samuel Johnson and of Horace Walpole she was distinguished for her sparkling wit and for her poetical powers; in the palmiest days of Sheridan she was successful as a playwright, and applauded by Garrick; in the days of Mrs. Montague and Elizabeth Carter she was welcomed and honoured by the bluest of the Blue Stockings; a few years later one of her books, which she had published anonymously, was attributed to the pen of one of the greatest divines of her day; and a little later still, during the childhood of the Princess Charlotte, she was the person especially selected by a well-known divine to write a book of advice on the education of a child then looked upon as the future Queen Regnant of the British Isles; in her maturer years she published a religious novel bearing upon certain phases of the Woman Question, a

work which was translated into the French language by Huber and favourably received by Madame de Staël, and which called forth from the pen of Sydney Smith one of his most satirical essays in the *Edinburgh Review*. In the days of Wilberforce and Clarkson Hannah More was known as one of their keenest friends and supporters, and she it was who, while they were struggling to bring about the abolition of the slave trade, introduced the system of spreading religious teaching by means of the tract; and it was Hannah More who first induced ladies of independent means to devote their time systematically and regularly to work among the poor.

Hannah More has taken her place in the history of the English people. "By her writings," says Green, "and by her own personal influence, Hannah More drew the sympathy of England to the poverty and crime of the agricultural labourer. The passionate impulse of human sympathy with the wronged and afflicted raised hospitals, endowed charities, built churches, sent missionaries to the heathen, supported Burke in his plea for the Hindoo, and Wilberforce and Clarkson in their crusade against the iniquity of the slave trade."

There are persons still living who remember in what reverence and veneration the memory of Hannah More was held by a contemporary generation. In a house in which a friend of mine lived when a girl she remembers two satin-wood bookcases which were greatly prized as having once belonged to Hannah More. It was upon the bookshelves of another friend who has passed her eighty-fifth birthday, that I first met with Hannah More's writings. Here I found a complete set of her works in one of the earliest editions, the year of the publication of some of the volumes being 1818. These had been presented to my friend's mother in the days of her maidenhood by the "Cœlebs" who afterwards became her husband. Upon the same shelves I also found a memoir

of Hannah More by William Roberts, issued the year after her death, in 1834.

Dipping into these volumes here and there, I gradually became so fascinated that I could not rest until I had read the greater part of them. As I read, I began to take notes; my interest in the personality of Hannah More, in her writings, in her friends, and in the story of her life, increased so much that I was soon led to extend my researches regarding her into wider fields. It is out of those researches that the present volume has grown.

No doubt it is a natural, but at the same time an unfortunate, result of her having been handed down to our times as such a very good woman, that Hannah More's writings are no longer read, and that her place in the literary life of our country is well-nigh forgotten. More than seventy years have passed since the latest edition of her works was given to the public, and there is nothing attractive in either their print or their binding. Their very appearance is "pious," and in spite of the fact that piety does not necessarily involve dulness, as Dr. South put it, we all feel that it only too often involves something very akin to it.

Yet any one who takes the trouble to glance through the life and writings of Hannah More will soon be struck by the fact that, all through her life, from her earliest girlhood to her old age, if there was one thing that she herself abhorred and shunned with an almost physical aversion, it was dulness—dulness in every shape or form. Dulness in persons, dulness in conversation, dulness in dramatic composition, dulness in books, and, above all, dulness in books on religion, she condemned with the utmost severity.

The two most virile women writers that our country has produced during the last hundred and fifty years are, without a doubt, Hannah More and Harriet Martineau. In reading the life and writings of the former the life and writings of the latter have constantly been brought to

my mind. Both used fiction as a vehicle of instruction, both were teachers of their generation, both were lionised by London society, and both remained unspoilt. Both of them underwent a great change as regards their religious convictions during middle age; both acted fearlessly up to the light that was given them.[1] Hannah More's end was the happiest.

Students of eighteenth-century literature cannot afford to ignore Hannah More. Her conversations with Samuel Johnson elicited some of his most brilliant utterances; her correspondence and friendship with Horace Walpole produced some of the most valuable letters ever penned by that king of letter-writers; Boswell could not have left her out of his great biography, even had he wished to do so; while subsequent editors of Johnson's life have not hesitated to corroborate or contradict statements made by Boswell, by reference and quotations from Hannah More's own letters. I think I may say without exaggeration that there are allusions to Hannah More in almost every volume of literary memoirs dealing with the last quarter of the eighteenth century that is worth reading, so wide was the circle of her friends and acquaintances among the great and the learned.

A hundred years ago it was still the fashion for maiden ladies to assume the title of "Mrs." after they had reached their fiftieth birthday, and the fact that Hannah More is generally referred to as "Mrs. Hannah More" has led to an erroneous idea among some people that she was a married woman; in fact I have heard her spoken of as such. She never married, but cannot, however, be said to have escaped unhurt the darts of Cupid, as will be seen in another part of this volume.

Hannah More lived in a letter-writing age, and a great

[1] This remarkable similarity between their lives may be carried still further; for both were at one time engaged to be married, and both died unwed. Harriet Martineau began her literary career with a book of prayers. Hannah More finished hers with a book on that subject. Harriet Martineau was born in 1802, so that there was half a century between them in point of time.

many of her letters have been preserved; they form the most authentic material from which her biography can be drawn; the growth, formation, and development of her mind can better be traced by a careful examination of her writings than by anything that has been written about her by either friends or foes. So far no critical analysis of her works as a whole has ever been attempted.

It has been truly said that much of a writer's reputation depends upon the period in which it arises, and there is an Italian proverb to the effect that quite half of it is thus influenced. Hannah More did not appear upon the literary horizon like one solitary star in a dark night; nor was she like one gleam of light shining through a hole in a shutter into a room where there was no other light. On the contrary, her writings, from first to last, appeared contemporaneously with, and often simultaneously with, similar works by men who had reached the highest fame in their own particular line. As a playwright she had Sheridan as her rival and Garrick as her critic; as a writer of political pamphlets she had Burke as a competitor; as a philanthropist she had Wilberforce as her friend and supporter, while her name is coupled with that of Robert Raikes as often as the origin of Sunday schools is mentioned. "When the name of Hannah is joined to that of More," wrote the biographer of Elizabeth Carter, "no explanatory note is needful. Every moral, and, what is more, every Christian philosopher must know what he owes to that well-principled mind and strong understanding, the whole powers of which have been directed to those best ends, the glory of God and the salvation of men." The writings of Hannah More may be regarded, with those of the illustrious Addison, like so many pieces of old plate—valuable in their weight, even when their fashion is no longer in vogue.[1]

Many a lesser light has had more than one biographer, but Hannah More had only one—William Roberts, Esq.,

[1] The simile is from Addison.

of Bristol, a distant connection, a personal friend in her old age, and himself an old man when he undertook the task. "It is a matter of no light moment," he says in his preface to the third edition, "to bring the memory of Hannah More before the world. Her history and her character belong to and represent her age, the form and pressure of which has of late been rapidly disappearing, to give place to a new order of things, and a very different system of manners; . . . In the twilight of the old, and in the dawn of the new era, Mrs. More accomplished her date here—succeeded, it may be, by ladies more talking and more talked about, but probably by none so capable of making the voice of instruction echo from the cottage to the saloon—from the house of clay to the hall of cedar. There was a happy balance in the qualities of this gifted lady which kept her from all extremes. . . . What woman was, and what woman is, in her best estate, in the past and present periods of her domestic history, were displayed in her deportment; and what woman should be under all estates was illustrated in those principles which raised her character above the reach of shifting opinions, and made it a pattern for all times and for all countries."

Her biography shows Hannah More to have been a true daughter of Eve, a real woman, with a woman's heart and a woman's frailties, and with what every womanly woman has ever been found to possess—a pride in her own sex; the good of the sex to which she belonged was very near her heart. She was as eager for the emancipation of woman as Mary Wollstonecraft, and she had the same ends in view, though she worked along a very different line.

Like St. Augustine, like Count Tolstoy, Hannah More mixed much with the world in her younger days, but she came out more spotless from the ordeal. Had she never left the retirement of her country home, had she never conversed on terms of familiarity with the great and the

learned, she could never have become that personality about whom we are now interesting ourselves; of the knowledge of the world which she gained in her youth she made admirable use throughout the remainder of her long and active life; her biographer could well afford to smile at the objections of those who, on reading the first edition of his work, and noting her correspondence with Horace Walpole, began to tax Hannah More with having spent some hours of her life in a manner inconsistent with the Christianity she always professed. He answered that it had not been his object to produce a work of art, but a work of truth, and it was with that object that he laid her whole life open to the scrutiny of the public. "Never," he said, "had there been a more natural woman, and it was his honest endeavour to present her as she really was, an endeavour in which he was eminently successful. Three editions of his work were called for in quick succession. The first edition of two thousand volumes was exhausted within three weeks of publication; the second edition, also consisting of two thousand copies, was exhausted almost as quickly, and before many months had elapsed a third and equally large edition was ready for the public early in the year 1835. To this last Mr. Roberts added a long preface, in which he attempted to answer some of the criticisms made by anonymous writers in such organs as *The Quarterly Review*.

It seems that one of his critics had found fault with Mr. Roberts for not throwing more light upon Hannah More's love affairs, and for not going minutely into every detail concerning her broken engagement and a second offer of marriage which quickly followed; while another had uttered some scathing remarks to the effect that Hannah must have put her Christianity into her pocket when she entered upon terms of friendship with such a character as Horace Walpole! To these Mr. Roberts replied that his advanced age had greatly in-

creased his inability and indisposition to enter the lists with a vizored knight, with whose stratagems he was but partially acquainted, or to engage in a dark contest with an invisible person, who, by his corporate style of "we," declared his name to be Legion, and might bring with him into the field, he knew not what invisible co-operation.

Hannah More was born in the year 1745, in the hamlet of Fishponds, in the parish of Stapleton, Gloucestershire. Her father, Mr. Jacob More, who came of a worthy family, was born at Thorpe Hall in Harleston, in Norfolk; he had been educated at the Norwich Grammar School under a brother of the famous Dr. Samuel Clarke, with a view to entering the Church, but a family lawsuit having swallowed up all the money that should have assisted his course towards that goal, he was obliged to change his plans and look out for a post as schoolmaster. This he obtained through the patronage of Lord Bottetourt, who placed him at Stapleton in Gloucestershire as headmaster of its foundation-school. Not long after his arrival at Stapleton Jacob More married the daughter of a respectable Gloucestershire farmer—a young woman who, though she had received very little education, was gifted with a sound judgment and plenty of good common sense; which afterwards showed itself in her wise management and careful upbringing of a family of five daughters, every one of whom lived to do credit to the home training she had received.

When Hannah More died at the age of eighty-eight, she had long outlived all her near relations, and all the friends of her early years, and this fact added to the difficulties met with by her biographer in gathering materials for his work other than those provided by a voluminous correspondence which had been placed at his disposal. Hannah More had lived in a letter-writing age; she had herself corresponded freely with some of her most brilliant contemporaries, and she had lived to read

the life and correspondence of many an old and valued acquaintance; it is therefore not surprising that, in her maturer years, she should have foreseen the possibility that a similar work regarding her own life would be called for in due time. Yet those of her letters which she herself preserved bear no trace of special selection. Hannah More, if she was to be shown to the public at all, wished to be shown in as true a light as possible. There were to be no artificial lights and shadows thrown upon the portrait. "I am not satisfied," she observed, "with the life of Mrs. Carter, nor much pleased with her reviewer. The biographer, in order to do away with the terrors of her piety and learning, has laboured to make her a woman of the world, and produced no less than five letters to prove that she subscribed to a ball; he respects her fondness for cards as if they were a passport to immortality. Every novel-reading Miss will now visit the circulating library with a warrant from Mrs. Carter." Mr. Roberts assures his readers that not only have the letters of Hannah More been laid before the public, but her words have neither been softened nor suppressed.

One branch of the More family from which Hannah More was descended belonged to the Church of England, and her father is described as a staunch Tory; but another branch was strongly Presbyterian, and Hannah and her sisters had often heard their father say that two of his great-uncles had been captains in Oliver Cromwell's army. His mother had been brought up as a Dissenter, for the children of another relation had often heard her tell of the days when her father boarded a minister in his home and kept his horse for ten pounds a year, and of how the congregation gathered stealthily at midnight in a room in her father's house to hear him preach, while her father himself guarded the entrance with a drawn sword; she must have been a woman of considerable nerve power, if the anecdote related of her is to be credited—that, to avoid having to send three miles for a

doctor when bleeding was necessary, she learned to perform the operation for herself.

In a letter from Elizabeth Newson, a distant connection, sent to the executrix a short time after Hannah's death, we read that the estate over which the lawsuit was fought was worth more than eight thousand a year when the successful claimant came into its possession, and that there was a large family mansion, with library, portraits, and other heirlooms; it was situated near Wenhaston in Suffolk, and not far from the town of Aldborough.

John Wesley, afterwards a personal friend of the More sisters, was in his forty-second year when Hannah was born, and Methodism had already passed through more than one phase of its history. Miss Elizabeth Carter was already enjoying a well-earned European reputation for her great learning, though she had not yet published her translation of Epictetus; Priestley, the discoverer of oxygen, who is looked upon as the greatest genius of the eighteenth century, was a child in his thirteenth year; Mrs. Barbauld was an infant of two; while Samuel Johnson, at thirty-six, was busied with the prospectus for his dictionary. General Oglethorpe was establishing the settlement of Georgia for the relief of English debtors and German Protestants; when he figures in Hannah More's correspondence at a later date he appears as an old man of ninety. The battle of Culloden had yet to be fought, and English people in the towns of the south-eastern coast were in hourly dread of a French invasion, while many of Miss Carter's friends had entreated her to leave her house at Deal, the landing-place of Julius Cæsar, and choose a safer locality. On the Continent Marshal Saxe had just defeated the Duke of Cumberland in Flanders, and it was on May 31 of this year that the English so heroically faced the French guns at Fontenoy.

Of Hannah More's earliest years some characteristic anecdotes have come down to us; she was undoubtedly a very quick and clever child, with a good memory and a

great eagerness for knowledge. Her mother, sitting down to teach her her letters before she was four, was surprised to find the child already a very fair reader, she having taught herself while listening to her sister's lessons. Mr. Roberts quaintly tells us that the minister who had so lately received her at the font was astonished at the ease with which she repeated to him the catechism before she had reached her fourth birthday.

Hannah's nurse was an elderly woman who in her younger days had been a servant in the house of the poet Dryden, and the child was never weary of hearing her tell how she had waited on him in his last illness, and constantly begged for stories about "Glorious John." It is more than probable that this early association with one who had lived in the house of so great a poet was among the earliest circumstances to turn Hannah's mind to that love of poetry so strongly developed in after life.

When she had reached the age of eight, Hannah's father, impressed with the child's unusual eagerness to learn, began to teach her himself; a better teacher she could hardly have found than the master of a boy's school who had distinguished himself in his own schooldays for his cleverness in mastering the classical languages. Jacob More had very few books, his library having been lost while on its way from Norwich to Stapleton, but so good was his memory that he was able to delight his little daughter's ears with all the most attractive tales from Greek and Roman history in the very words of the ancient historians. His children loved to hear their father recite Greek and Latin poetry, even though they could not, at that tender age, understand a word of it. This is one of the facts that Mr. Roberts' reviewers thought fit to ridicule, yet I cannot conceive why they should have done so. We all know that it is one great secret of mastering a language easily that our ear should have become accustomed to the sound before our brains are wearied with grammatical rules. That is the method

employed in the infant schools of Mohammedan Central Asia up to the present day, and it is thus that the difficult classical Arabic is so quickly and easily acquired by all Mohammedan children; long before they are considered old enough to learn, they are sent to school to listen while the elder children repeat their passages from the Koran.

Those were the days when a reputation for learning was almost as detrimental to a woman's social prospects as the accusation of witchcraft, and Jacob More fully shared the horror felt by his generation for female pedantry. Instead of being highly delighted by the precocity shown by his bright little Hannah, he became frightened at the ease with which she mastered the lessons he gave her in the rudiments of the Latin language, and her quick understanding of the mathematical problems he had begun to explain to her so filled him with alarm that he brought her studies in that direction to an abrupt close. It appears, however, that Hannah's mother was inclined to be proud of her promising daughter, and begged her husband to continue her education. This he at length agreed to do, but his consent to her entering upon any new studies was only wrung from him by the joint importunities of mother and daughter. He seems to have been seriously afraid that Hannah's reputation would be damaged by a schoolboy knowledge of mathematics, and accordingly that particular branch of study was never resumed, though Hannah often said in after life that the little she had learned had been of the greatest advantage to her in the whole course of her intellectual progress.

Hannah's four sisters were Mary, Elizabeth, Sarah, and Martha, and it was between the two last named that she came; Martha being one year younger than herself. From the first their parents were anxious that their children should have an education which should enable them to support themselves by teaching, and Mary, the eldest, was sent to a French school at Bristol. In short,

it was arranged that the sisters should follow the calling of their father. Much is said in these days of the advantage it is to a girl to grow up in a family where there are brothers as well as sisters, but it is not difficult to find instances of girls having more attention paid to their preparation for life in families where there are no sons to engross the parents' attention. And, indeed, I think it may be stated as a fact that English girls who have no brothers to lean upon, to look up to, and to give way to, are usually far more self-reliant when they reach the days of womanhood than is the case with their more fortunate associates. The girl who never had any brothers is almost always better fitted to fight her way alone in after life than the girl who had a brother to pinch her in the nursery and pull out the eyes of her favourite doll.

Mary went as a weekly boarder to the French school, and during her week-ends spent at home she regularly taught her younger sisters the lessons she had received during the week. Unless she taught them on Sundays, it is difficult to guess when she found the time, for she must have been back at the school early enough to take her place with the other scholars at the commencement of Monday morning's work. What with the help thus given and with her own private study, Hannah made so much progress in the French language that it was not long before some French officers of rank and education, who were prisoners on parole during the war of the Austrian succession, chose her to act as their interpreter when they visited her parents' hospitable roof. This was excellent practice for the young girl, and we can quite believe that "it laid the foundation of that free and elegant use of the language for which she was afterwards distinguished."

From the moment she had learned to write, Hannah was never so happy as when she had a pencil and paper before her; and when she could possess herself of a scrap

of paper her delight was to scribble upon it some essay or poem, with a pointed moral. Her tiny manuscripts were hidden away in a dark corner where the servants kept their brushes and dusters. Hannah and Martha slept in the same room, and it was to Martha that Hannah recited her verses. Martha was very proud of Hannah's effusions, and often, fearing they might be forgotten, she would steal downstairs, light a candle, and write them out on any odd bit of paper she could find.

The children's mother was fond of telling how Hannah, when a very small child, would amuse herself by calling a chair her carriage, and pretending that she was riding to London in it to "see bishops and booksellers." Her greatest wish in those childish days was that she might some day be rich enough to possess a whole quire of writing-paper. When this wish was at length fulfilled, and her mother had given her a quire to do what she liked with, she filled every page of it with imaginary letters to wicked persons, persuading them to turn from their evil ways, and also with imaginary replies evincing penitence of the correspondent and sorrow for past crimes, with good resolutions to lead a better life in future.

Mrs. More must have died when Hannah was still quite a small child, as she is not mentioned again in the biography. Mary, the eldest girl, was twenty-one years of age when she and her sisters opened their school for young ladies at Bristol; she was the business woman of the undertaking, and indeed of the family; Elizabeth, or Betty, as she was called, took the housekeeping; Sally became assistant teacher, and Hannah and Martha were two of the pupils, being only eleven and ten years old at that time. The school appears to have been opened about the year 1757, and it did well from the very outset; this fact is itself an eloquent testimony to the respect and esteem in which these youthful schoolmistresses were held.[1] Some of the best families in the neighbourhood

[1] Bishop Horne's daughter was one of the later pupils.

entrusted their daughters to their care, and throughout its whole career under Mary and her sisters, from the day it was opened till the time came for these ladies to retire from their labours in affluent circumstances, the school enjoyed a more than ordinary amount of prosperity, and scholars who had passed through it were always distinguished for the "good grounding" they had received. It has been asked, "What did these young ladies teach?" First and foremost, they taught the English language, and Addison was the model they set before their pupils when instructing them in English composition. One of the first books that Hannah laid hands on when the school began to have its little library was a volume of the *Spectator*. Throughout her life we find her retaining her affection and appreciation for Addison, and when at length it fell to her lot to suggest a course of reading for the Princess Charlotte, Addison was among the writers she most warmly recommended. French and Italian were also among the well-taught subjects in this school; Hannah herself gave early proof of her proficiency in both of these languages. Needlework was certainly taught, for it was then a high art, and no young lady's education was considered complete until she had become a proficient in it.

It was about seventeen years after Mary More had opened her school that Mrs. Montague tried to persuade Mrs. Barbauld to establish a college for young ladies, and promised to give her all the patronage in her power, but Mrs. Barbauld would have none of it. She did not take at all to the idea. "The best way," she observed, "for a woman to acquire knowledge is from conversation with father or brother or friend." She was convinced that a too great fondness for books was not conducive to the happiness of women. This lady did not, however, object to her husband's starting a school for young gentlemen; she even consented to be herself their instructor in English composition, and lived to be spoken of by one of

her pupils, Dr. William Taylor of Norwich, as "the mother of his mind." It is evident that the Misses More were far ahead of their time when they devoted themselves to the task of being mothers to female minds.

When Hannah was sixteen, she was taken to hear some lectures on eloquence given at Bristol by the elder Sheridan, and so great was her enjoyment of this unusual intellectual treat that she afterwards poured out her youthful enthusiasm in some verses, which eventually found their way through a mutual friend to Mr. Sheridan himself. The lines pleased the lecturer so much that he expressed a wish to meet their author, and when he had made Hannah's acquaintance he spoke warmly in praise of her dawning genius.

Not long after this event Dr. Woodward of Bristol was called to attend Hannah in a dangerous illness; on the occasion of one of his visits the doctor was so carried away by his patient's conversational powers that he sat talking with her for three hours, and quite forgot the object of his visit. On the way downstairs he suddenly remembered that he had forgotten to fulfil his errand, and returning once more to her bedside, he exclaimed, "How are you to-day, my poor child?" [1]

In those days there was a good deal of intellectual society in Bristol and its neighbourhood, as indeed there has been ever since, and the Misses More could count among their friends many a man who had made himself a name in science or literature. Ferguson, the astronomer, was one of their circle; he had been engaged to give some popular lectures on his subject to Bristol audiences, and was often at their house. So much indeed was he struck with Hannah's taste in composition that at one time he was in the habit of letting her look through his manuscripts before sending them to the printer. Another friend from whom she derived much intellectual benefit

[1] Hannah More refers to this incident many years after in a letter to Mrs. Kenmert dated 1787. See *Mem.* ii. 47.

was a Mr. Peach, a linen-draper, who had counted Hume the historian among his most intimate friends, and who had been entrusted by Hume to correct his history. Mr. Peach used to say that he had discovered some two hundred Scotticisms in his friend's work More than twenty years after the death of Mr. Peach, when Hannah More met the Bishop of Dromore in London, at the time he was proposing to write a life of Hume, she was able to clear up the mystery that hung about two years of the historian's life, of which no particulars had till then been forthcoming, by telling him she had heard from Mr. Peach that Hume spent those two years in a merchant's counting-house in Bristol, "whence he was dismissed on account of the promptitude of his pen in the correction of the letters entrusted to him to copy."

In the year 1762, when Hannah was in her seventeenth year, she wrote a pastoral drama, called *The Search after Happiness*, and prefixed to it the following lines from Thomson:—

> "To rear the tender thought,
> To teach the young idea how to shoot,
> To pour the fresh instruction o'er the mind,
> To breathe the enlivening spirit, and to fix
> The generous purpose in the female breast."

In dedicating this drama to her friend Mrs. Gwatkin, our poetess remarks that "the following poem turns chiefly on the danger of delay or error in the important article of education"—surely a serious subject for a girl of sixteen to tackle! In a preface written many years later, Hannah tells her readers that her object in writing this poem, "which was written in very early youth," was "an earnest wish to furnish a substitute for the very improper custom, which then prevailed, of allowing plays, and those not always of the purest kind, to be acted by young ladies in boarding schools." She then goes on to speak of the satisfaction it has given her to know "that this little poem and the *Sacred Dramas* have very fre-

quently been adopted to supply the place of those more dangerous amusements.

In the year 1762 there was no such thing as a Bowdlerised Shakespeare; there were no golden treasuries and selections from the best authors to put into the hands of young people, and Hannah More's attempt to supply this deficiency was a bit of real pioneer work in that direction. The play was acted for the first time by the pupils of her sister's school, and its success at once brought Hannah into a good deal of notice in her own neighbourhood. This was her first public appearance as a poetess. Other schools began also to act *The Search after Happiness*. Miss Mitford describes at length the "getting up of this highly improving comedy" at a school in Reading.

CHAPTER II

A PROPOSAL OF MARRIAGE

By the time she had reached the age of twenty, our poetess had acquired a very fair knowledge, not only of Latin, but also of the French, Italian, and Spanish languages. Having access to the best libraries of the neighbourhood, she spent much time in "exercising her genius and polishing her style in translations, especially of Horace." She had been strongly attracted by the beauties of the poetry of Metastasio, and had already translated many of his finer passages into English verse before she set about the larger task of giving his opera *Regulus* to English readers. None of these early attempts were printed, but among the friends who composed her literary circle there were many who read and appreciated them. Like Mrs. Barbauld, Hannah ruthlessly destroyed the greater part of her early writings; the only one, indeed, which escaped destruction was Metastasio's *Regulus;* and this, only after it had suffered neglect for a number of years, she eventually worked up into a five-act play, and published under the title of *The Inflexible Captive.*

Among her literary friends at this period of her life we find the names of Dean Tucker, Dr. Ford, and Dr. Stonehouse; a proof, as her biographer has observed, of the early maturity of her understanding.

In studying the biographies of men and women who have made their mark in the world, I have almost invariably found that they had to contend from time to time with a more than ordinary share of the trouble and waste of time caused by sickness and ill-health. It is true that Mr. Gladstone once told a lady of my acquaintance that

he did not know what a headache was like till he had passed his eightieth birthday, but his was a very exceptional case. From her earliest infancy Hannah More was constitutionally delicate, and a constant martyr to headache. She was often obliged on that account to suspend all mental activity for weeks together, and it was to recover from one of these attacks that she was sent to Weston, in which place she made the acquaintance of Dr. John Langhorne, who had already made his mark as a poet, and who afterwards, in collaboration with his brother William, translated Plutarch's "poem" from the Greek.[1]

For some time a "very lively intellectual intercourse was sustained" between Hannah and Dr. Langhorne, and the first letter given in Mr. Roberts' work is from the pen of the latter. It is dated "Blagdon House, October 22, 1773." Several more of his letters, written in the years 1775 and 1776, are also given in her biography, and we are told that the friendship was brought to an abrupt close. Great family troubles had, it appears, been among the causes which drove this man of brilliant capabilities to habits of intemperance, with the result that he forfeited the friendship of the More sisters, along with that of many other persons in that neighbourhood. In the letter dated February 12, 1775, Dr. Langhorne wrote: "I never had a doubt concerning the poems of Ossian. It was impossible the originals could exist. What chiefly gives them their antique air is their penury of ideas; a circumstance that does more honour to the inventor's judgment than to his imagination. After all, I have a regard for Macpherson, who has certainly some talents, and is a well-behaved man."

Some critics of her biography tried to make copy out of the fact that Dr. Langhorne's letters to Hannah More

[1] Dr. John Langhorne was born in 1735. The University of Edinburgh had granted him his D.D. in recognition of his Scottish pastoral, entitled *Genius and Valour*.

contained messages from his wife, while there was undoubted evidence of that lady's death having occurred at a much earlier date. But the simple truth was that Dr. Langhorne had already married a second time before he made Hannah's acquaintance.

We now come to the love episode in Hannah More's life. It happened that at the Misses More's school there were two young ladies of the name of Turner, who were in the habit of spending their holidays at the beautiful home of a middle-aged cousin, also bearing the name of Turner. Whether this gentleman was a bachelor or a widower, we are not told, but at all events his household was presided over by a lady-housekeeper. Mr. Turner's residence at Belmont was in the midst of attractive scenery, and replete with every comfort and even luxury that money could provide ; he had carriages and horses and everything calculated to contribute towards an enjoyable home. When he gave his young cousins permission to invite two school friends to join them at Belmont for the holidays, Hannah and Patty More, who were about their own age, were quite ready to accept the invitation. "The consequence," writes a relative of Mr. Turner's, to whom we are indebted for the details of this affair, "was natural. She was very clever and fascinating, and he was generous and sensible ; he became attached and made his offer, which was accepted. He was a man of large fortune, and she was young and dependent. She quitted her interest in the concern of the school, and was at great expense in fitting herself out to be the wife of a man of that condition. The day was fixed more than once for the marriage, and Mr. Turner each time postponed it. Her sisters and friends interfered, and would not permit her to be so treated and trifled with. He continued in the wish to marry her ; but her friends, after his former conduct, and on other accounts, persevered in keeping up her determination not to renew the engagement."

Before Hannah broke off her engagement with Mr. Turner, the sisters called their friend Dr. (afterwards Sir James) Stonehouse into their councils. This kind friend readily consented to act as intermediary between the couple, and it was with his assistance that the engagement was finally terminated in a perfectly amicable manner. At the first meeting that took place between Hannah and her quondam fiancé, Mr. Turner begged her to let him settle an annuity upon her, as a sort of *amende honorable*, but she would not hear of such a thing, and he was obliged to drop the matter for the time being. He was well aware of the expense and trouble to which the young lady had been put, and his conscience telling him that Hannah was the real sufferer in this painful episode, he could not rest until he had talked the matter over with their mutual friend Dr. Stonehouse. Between them the two gentlemen arranged that, without consulting Hannah further upon the subject, Mr. Turner should settle upon her such a sum of money as should set her free to devote herself to her literary pursuits, and "compensate, in some degree, for the robbery he had committed upon her time." The annuity decided upon was £200 a year.

Dr. Stonehouse undertook to become himself the agent and trustee, and the whole thing was settled without Hannah's knowing anything of the matter. When she did find out, she again refused to avail herself of the money, and it was only after a considerable interval and on the entreaties of her best friends that she could at last be induced to accept the arrangement.

Four years after Hannah More's death the curate of Wrington, whose church she had attended regularly during the later years of her life, wrote: "Mr. Turner, indeed, always entertained the most respectful friendship for Hannah More. His first toast daily, whether alone or in society, was 'Hannah More.'" But the two do not appear to have met again for twenty years. More than two decades had passed since the rupture of their engage-

ment, when one summer's day, a gentleman made his appearance at the gate of Hannah's cottage, Cowslip Green, and stood admiring the situation and the pretty garden. He was invited by the elder Miss More to walk in and inspect the place, and it was soon discovered that the visitor was no other than Hannah's former suitor, Mr. Turner. The discovery proved a mutual surprise and pleasure, and resulted in a renewal of the old friendship. We are told that Mr. Turner dined several times at Cowslip Green after this happy encounter, and that Hannah never afterwards failed in presenting him with a copy of each new work of her pen as it issued from the press. At his death it was discovered that Mr. Turner had left Hannah More a thousand pounds in his will.

None who have studied the temperament and character of Hannah More can doubt for a moment that the storm and stress of this, her one and only love affair, could have passed over that gentle and sensitive soul without causing the deepest mental suffering, and leaving an ineffaceable if invisible scar upon that tender heart. It was a cruel ordeal both to her affections and to her womanly pride. Many a young woman in her situation has been known to marry the first new suitor who appeared on the scene, out of spite or bravado ; but not so Hannah. No revenge could cure her wound ; it was too deep and too real.

"Rien ne nous rend si grands, qu'un grand douleur." [1]

We are not surprised to learn that she then and there formed a resolution never again to expose herself to so painful a trial, and to keep herself quite free from such entanglements in the future. This resolution was kept, and another offer of marriage, which she received shortly after, was refused, though the man from whom it came remained her friend through life. "A disappointment in love," wrote the graceful Addison, "is more hard to get over than any other ; the passion itself so softens and

[1] De Musset.

subdues the heart, that it disables it from bearing up against the woes and distresses which befall it. The mind meets with other misfortunes in her whole strength, and stands collected within herself, and sustains the shock with all the force which is natural to her; but a heart in love has its foundations sapped." If Hannah's youthful feelings of rebellion against the restrictions imposed upon her sex are betrayed in the words she puts into the lips of Cleora, as some have supposed, how much more probable is it that our poetess was expressing her own sentiments when she portrayed those of Emmeline, one of the characters in *The Fatal Falsehood*, who has been refused by the man she loved—

> "I've been a weak, a fond, believing woman,
> And credulous beyond my sex's softness:
> But with the weakness, I've the pride of woman.
> I loved with virtue, but I fondly loved:
> That passion fixed my fate, determined all,
> And marked at once the colour of my life.
> Hearts that love well, love long—they love but once."

And later—

> "I knew a maid who loved—but she was mad—
> Fond, foolish girl! Thank Heaven, I am not mad—
> Yet the afflicting angel hath been with me:
> But do not tell my father—he would grieve;
> Sweet, good old man—perhaps he'd weep to hear it:
> I never saw my father weep but once;
> I'll tell you when it was—I did not weep;
> 'Twas when—but soft, my brother must not know it,
> 'Twas when his poor fond daughter was refused."

Jacob More did not die till many years after this event in his daughter's life, and though his name does not occur in the accounts of it that have reached us, we may take it for granted that, next to Hannah herself, he was one of the principal sufferers. And as for Hannah, we are told by her friend and biographer that "her correct and tender mind did not come out from these embarrassments without

a certain degree of distress and disturbance. "Every one who knew anything of the affair was satisfied that no blame whatever could be attached to the young lady," and that the broken engagement was due "to an elderly man growing shy, and fearing to have rashly committed himself," as Charlotte Yonge puts it.

However, it is an ill wind that blows nobody any good, and when the love incident had become a thing of the past, Hannah found herself the mistress of a snug little annuity of £200 a year, which at once liberated her from the necessity of earning her bread as a schoolmistress, and gave her the longed-for opportunity of devoting herself entirely to literature. At the same time, she was now able to visit London and to see something of London society. Had the good Mr. Turner married the bright young girl by whose charms he had been so captivated, instead of settling an annuity on her, it is more than probable that her literary talents would have lain for ever buried in a beautiful country home, and that neither the name of Hannah More nor that of Mrs. Turner would have found a place in the history of the English people. Indeed Mr. Turner himself seems to have felt this, for we read that he often used to remark to his friends that it was a special providence which had overruled his wishes to be the husband of Hannah More, and that she had been clearly intended for higher things.

In a letter written by one of her sisters soon after the engagement had been broken off, we learn that there was no sitting down to mope on Hannah's part—no idle melancholy. Our poetess threw herself at once and with all her energies into the literary studies that had been for a time suspended. "From her uprising till her down-lying," writes the sister, "she does nothing but read Latin;" and a little later we find in another letter: "The poet is a lazy, idle poet, and does nothing at all but read Virgil and Cicero." [1]

[1] See Thompson.

The Search after Happiness was, as we have seen, publicly performed in the year 1773, and before that date it had been produced on the private platforms of schools for young ladies. From this play, or rather dialogue, Hannah More had gained no small reputation as a poetess in her own neighbourhood, and this had been increased by the performance of her new play, which was produced at Bath;[1] and when she paid her second visit to London, in the winter of 1773–4, her reputation had preceded her, and she was received with open arms by some of the leading literary personages of the day. In later years she would humorously describe to her friends the rapture that she had experienced on first being introduced to a real live author.

The exact date of Hannah More's first visit to the metropolis is uncertain, but we find that she and one of her sisters were introduced to David Garrick early in 1773. Some mutual friend had shown Garrick a letter of Hannah More's in which she had graphically described the effect produced upon her mind by seeing the great actor in the part of King Lear. Garrick was so pleased with the letter that he at once expressed a wish to meet its writer, upon which an interview was speedily arranged, and "after an hour passed together, they parted reciprocally pleased, having discovered in each other what was gratifying to both—natural manners, original powers, and wit in union with good-nature." The very next day Hannah More was a guest at Garrick's house, and there she and Mrs. Montagu met for the first time.

From her earliest years Hannah had cherished a desire to "know the great, and hear the wise," and now her wish was fulfilled. We see her at this stage of her career, an attractive-looking young woman of twenty-nine, with delicate and refined features and large dark eyes full of intelligence and humour. Her sister Sally

[1] *The Inflexible Captive*, produced at Bath in 1773.

was always looked upon as the wit of the family, but Hannah too had an unusual share of wit, in addition to her brilliant conversational powers, and was particularly good at quick repartee; she was the possessor of a remarkably well-instructed mind and a virility of judgment that was particularly rare in women at a time when learning in a female was almost looked upon as a disgrace, at least in middle-class society. A century before her time, as Macaulay has pointed out, it was quite a usual thing for a lady to be able to read the Greek and Latin authors in the original; in fact, a knowledge of the dead languages was, at one period, the only key that opened the door to all that was best in literature, for there were practically no translations, and even modern works were often written in Latin. It has been taken as a sure indication of Shakespeare's having been a Greek scholar that he drew so largely from the writings of Plato at a date when there was no translation of that author in the English language. That Hannah More had gained a fair mastery of the Latin language we have already seen, and that she had conquered the difficulties of at least three modern languages—French, Italian, and Spanish. She was no raw and ignorant girl when she first made her appearance at the blue-stocking parties.

CHAPTER III

"THE INFLEXIBLE CAPTIVE"

In the latter half of the eighteenth century the London season appears to have commenced in February and to have ended about the middle or end of May. In April many fashionable people were already leaving the metropolis, and June was looked upon as a month for the country. It was not till George III. had come to the throne that June became a part of the London season. It became so because the King's birthday fell in that month.

Hannah More's visits to London were always made in winter. Soon after her introduction to Garrick she had the pleasure she had so long desired of making the acquaintance of Dr. Johnson. The meeting took place at the house of Sir Joshua Reynolds, who prepared her for the possibility of Johnson's being in a sad and silent mood. As it was, he came to meet her in a most cordial manner, and holding perched upon his finger Sir Joshua's pet American parrot.[1] He accosted her with a verse of a *Morning Hymn* she had written at the request of Sir James Stonehouse, and they spent a very agreeable evening chatting together.

Hannah More's introduction to the great and the greatly endowed was sudden and general. One or two bright letters written at this time by her sister Sally give us glimpses of the scenes in which she was taking part. Sally was three years older than Hannah, and was evidently a very sprightly young woman; she thoroughly appreciated the warm reception they had met with from

[1] This parrot has been immortalised in several of Sir Joshua's paintings.

so many of the leading spirits of the literary and artistic world, and while fully recognising the fact that all this was due to the genius of her younger sister, gratefully received the smaller share of attention that fell to her lot without feeling the slightest shade of jealousy; she took a sisterly pride in seeing her more brilliant sister's merits and attractions meeting with the appreciation they deserved. "Since I wrote last," she says, in a letter to the sisters at home, "Hannah has been introduced by Miss Reynolds to Baretti and to Edmund Burke (the sublime and beautiful Edmund Burke!). From a large party of literary persons assembled at Sir Joshua's she received the most encouraging compliments; and the spirit with which she acknowledged them was acknowledged by all present, as Miss Reynolds informed poor us. Miss Reynolds repeats her little poem by heart, with which also the great Johnson is much pleased."

Miss Frances Reynolds lived with her brother for many years, and kept house for him. Madame d'Arblay describes her as "a woman of worth and understanding, but of a singular character; . . . living in an habitual perplexity of mind and irresolution of conduct, which to herself was restlessly tormenting and to all around her was teasingly wearisome." She busied herself with both pen and pencil. Of her *Essay on Taste*, Johnson said, "There are on these few pages of remarks such a nicety of observation as Locke or Pascal might be proud of."[1]

In a note to the third edition of the biography Mr. Roberts thought it necessary to beg the reader to peruse with all due indulgence the joyful effusions of an ardent and intelligent country girl who found herself suddenly introduced to the choicest society of the metropolis, and informs the reader that all who knew the sisters could bear testimony to Sally's originality of humour and playfulness of imagination, adding that Sally too had

[1] See Leslie's *Life of Sir J. Reynolds*, vol. i. p. 92, and note by Taylor.

her literary gifts, and that in later years some of the most valuable of the Cheap Repository Tracts were the production of her pen.

In a later letter, also written in 1774, Sally wrote: "We have paid another visit to Miss Reynolds. She had sent to engage Dr. Percy (Percy's collection—now you know him), who is quite a sprightly modern, instead of a rusty antique as I had expected. He was no sooner gone than the most amiable and obliging of women (Miss Reynolds) ordered the coach to take us to Dr. Johnson's *very own house;* yes, Abyssinia's Johnson! Dictionary Johnson! Rambler's, Idler's and Irene's Johnson! Can you picture to yourselves the palpitation of our hearts as we approached his mansion. The conversation turned upon a new work of his just going to the press (the *Tour to the Hebrides*); and then he spoke about his old friend Richardson, the author of *Clarissa*.

"Miss Reynolds told the doctor of our rapture and exclamations on the road. He shook his scientific head at Hannah, and said 'She was a silly thing.' When our visit was ended, he called for his hat (as it rained), to attend us down a very long entry to our coach, and not Rasselas could have acquitted himself more *en cavalier*. We are engaged with him at Sir Joshua's, Wednesday evening. What do you think of us?" She then goes on to tell how, not finding Johnson in his parlour when they entered, Hannah seated herself in his great armchair, hoping to catch a little ray of his genius, at which incident he laughed heartily when it was related to him, and told her it was a chair he never sat in. Mr. Roberts tells us that Johnson afterwards mentioned to Miss Reynolds how much he had been touched by the enthusiasm which was visible in the whole manner of the young authoress, and was evidently genuine and unaffected.

Sir Joshua Reynolds had been knighted in the year

1768, on his becoming the first president of the Royal Academy, which was opened that year; and it was he who established the annual Academy dinner. The coach in which Miss Reynolds carried Hannah More to visit Johnson was probably the one described by Sir Joshua's most distinguished pupil, Northcote—"A chariot on the panels of which were curiously painted the four seasons of the year in allegorical figures. The wheels were ornamented with carved foliage and gilding; the liveries also of his servants were laced with silver."[1] The artist seems to have looked upon all this splendour as a useful advertisement.

John Courtenay, afterwards M.P. for Tamworth, who was a frequent guest at Sir Joshua's hospitable board, gave to Sir James Mackintosh an amusing description of the way in which the artist entertained his friends: "The wine, the cookery, and dishes were but little attended to, nor was the fish or venison ever talked of or recommended." Sir Joshua would sit perfectly composed amidst the animated bustle of his guests . . . always attentive—by the help of his trumpet—to what was said, never minding what was eaten or drunk, but leaving every one at liberty to scramble for himself. Peers temporal and spiritual, statesmen, physicians, lawyers, a tors, men of letters, painters, musicians, made up the ley group, and played their parts, "without dissonance or discord." Dinner was served precisely at five whether all the company had arrived or not."[2]

We find that Garrick was himself behind the scenes on the first night of the production of Hannah More's *Inflexible Captive* in the Theatre Royal at Bath, and in a letter written by Sally at the time, we read—"All the world of dukes and barons was there; I sat next a duke and a lord. All expressed the highest approbation of the whole. Never was a piece represented there known

[1] See *Life of Sir J. Reynolds*, by Leslie, 1865.
[2] Leslie, *op. cit.*

to have received so much applause. A shout continued for some minutes after the curtain dropped." Garrick was so pleased with the success of *The Inflexible Captive* that he wished to see it produced at Covent Garden, but, according to Mr. Thompson, a pique of the principal actress rendered this impracticable. In a work to which we have already referred,[1] we find the following: "*The Inflexible Captive*, by Miss Hannah More, 1774. Many of the speeches in this tragedy are well-written, but on the whole it is a very dull play; it was acted at Bristol; Henderson is said to have acted Regulus. Dimond certainly acted the part."[2]

In those days Bath and Bristol were, in one way, more closely in touch with London than they are in these days of express trains and motor cars. Bath in particular was visited almost annually by all persons of distinction, both social and intellectual; it was society's great meeting-place outside London. People went there ostensibly that they might benefit by the waters, but the mere fact that everybody else would be there was in itself a powerful attraction. Those were the days when even ladies entered the waters in public, with special costumes and broad-brimmed hats, and did not come out till their faces were the colour of boiled lobsters. It was certainly no small triumph for a play to receive the approbation of a Bath audience in those days.

Hannah More dedicated *The Inflexible Captive* to the Hon. Mrs. Boscawen, whose acquaintance she had made during her second visit to London, and to whom she had become greatly attached. This lady, the widow of Admiral Boscawen, who had defeated the Toulon Squadron off Lagos, was one of the hostesses of the blue-stocking parties, and the friend of everybody whose friendship

[1] *The English Stage from the Restoration.*

[2] *The Inflexible Captive* was first performed at Bath in 1773, according to some authorities.

was of any value. To this lady Hannah afterwards addressed her poem *Sensibility* and the lines—

> "Yours is the bliss, and Heaven no dearer sends,
> To call the wisest, brightest, best, your friends."

The poetess explains in a prefatory note to *The Inflexible Captive* that this piece is, in many parts, a pretty close imitation of the *Attilio Regulo* of Metastasio, but is enlarged and extended into a tragedy of five acts. "Historical truth," she adds, "has in general been followed, except in some less essential instances." Like *The Search after Happiness*, this play is practically without action, and consists almost entirely of dialogue. The writer herself was fully conscious of this defect, and states in her preface to a late edition that she never considered the plot as sufficiently bustling and dramatic for representation.

The best picture of her life at this time is that given in her letters to the sisters she had left behind in the country. They are letters written straight from the heart, and intended for no eyes but those of her own family circle. "What I want in a letter," she used to say, "is the picture of my friend's mind, and the common course of his life," and she sent to her sisters the kind of letters she liked to receive from them. "I am going to-day to a great dinner," she writes in 1775. "Nothing can be conceived so absurd, extravagant, and fantastical, as the present mode of dressing the head. . . . I have just escaped from one of the most fashionable disfigurers; and though I charged him to dress me with the greatest simplicity, and to have only a very distant eye upon the fashion, just enough to avoid the pride of singularity, without running into ridiculous excess; yet in spite of all these sage didactics, I absolutely blush at myself, and turn to the glass with as much caution as a vain beauty just risen from the small-pox; which cannot be a more disfiguring disease than the present mode of dressing."

A few weeks later she writes an account of her first

dinner at Mrs. Montagu's, in Hill Street, Berkeley Square. Dr. Johnson, Elizabeth Carter, Mrs. Boscawen, and Sir Joshua Reynolds were of the party. "I felt myself a worm," she writes, "the more a worm for the consequence which was given me, by mixing me with such a society; but as I told Mrs. Boscawen, and with great truth, I had an opportunity of making an experiment of my heart, by which I learnt that I was not envious, for I certainly did not repine at being the meanest person in company."

Her description of Mrs. Montagu, the "Queen of the Blue-stockings," is particularly interesting: "Mrs. Montagu received me with the most encouraging kindness; she is not only the finest genius, but the finest lady I ever saw; she lives in the highest style of magnificence; her apartments and table are in the most splendid taste: but what baubles are these when speaking of a Montagu! her form (for she has no body) is delicate even to fragility; her countenance the most animated in the world; the sprightly vivacity of fifteen, with the judgment and experience of a Nestor. But I fear she is hastening to decay very fast; her spirits are so active, that they must soon wear out the little frail receptacle that holds them." [1]

Mrs. Montagu was one of those women—

> "Where in manners enchanting no blemish we trace,
> And the soul keeps the promise we had from the face."

Her husband had left her an income of seven thousand a year, and she entertained her friends in a magnificent style. Her name was already known to the literary world as that of Shakespeare's most valiant defender against the attacks of Voltaire. Her essay on Shakespeare had appeared in the year 1769, and had at once attracted a great deal of attention both on the Continent and in England; it had been published anonymously, only a

[1] Mrs. Montagu was then in her fifty-sixth year, and had only lost her husband quite recently. She did not die till the year 1800.

few of her most intimate friends being in the secret, and many people had erroneously attributed it to the pen of Elizabeth Carter; but that lady's biographer informs us that Miss Carter flatly denied even having corrected it for the press. The essay boldly points out Voltaire's ignorance of the poet he had attempted to criticise, and his vanity was so wounded by Mrs. Montagu's thrusts that he could never after hear her name mentioned without abusing her. The essay was translated into French and other modern languages, and was instrumental in introducing Shakespeare to continental readers. Till then he had been little read outside our own country. A complete edition of his plays appeared in French shortly after the publication of Mrs. Montagu's essay. "It served to convince the Continent of the truth of what she had asserted, that Voltaire either did not understand that difficult author, or else wilfully misrepresented his meaning." Horace Walpole had also answered Voltaire's criticisms of Shakespeare in the preface to his *Castle of Otranto*.

Of her first meeting with Elizabeth Carter, Hannah More writes: "Mrs. Carter has in her person a great deal of what the gentlemen mean when they say such a one is a 'poetical lady';[1] however, independently of her great talents and learning, I like her much; she has affability, kindness, and goodness." Elizabeth Carter was at this time fifty-eight years of age. At the early age of twenty-two she had achieved a continental fame for her great learning. When little more than thirty she had undertaken the entire education of her young half-brother, and prepared him for Cambridge with such success that his examiners, pleased at the way in which he passed his entrance examination to that university, inquired at what school or college he had been so carefully prepared. During the years in which she had devoted

[1] Leslie took this to be a euphemism for "Miss Carter is a fright," but had he studied her portraits he would not have fallen into this error.

herself to her brother's education she had given her spare moments to the preparation of her translation of Epictetus, which appeared in the year 1749. She had been introduced to Dr. Johnson about the year 1738, before he made his name in the world, and just after he had published his Imitation of the Third Satire of Juvenal, under the title of "London." In a letter dated June 25, 1738, her father wrote to her, "You mention Johnson, but that is a name with which I am utterly unacquainted; neither his scholastic, critical, or poetical character have ever reached my ears." Dr. Carter was in his own day a critical scholar of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, and he had given all his children, daughters as well as sons, a scholastic education. Elizabeth appeared at first to be rather a dull child, and her lessons were learned with great slowness and difficulty; in fact, her father himself repeatedly begged her to give up all thoughts of becoming a scholar. She had, however, such thirst for knowledge, that she was determined to conquer every difficulty, and when she found herself inclined to fall asleep over her books, she would take snuff or chew green tea to keep herself awake. Her proficiency in the Greek language afterwards became so great that Johnson once remarked of a celebrated scholar that he knew Greek better than any one he had ever known, except Elizabeth Carter.

There is one point in which Elizabeth Carter's views differed from all other classical scholars, either of her own day or of ours; she had a supreme contempt for the study of grammar as grammar; she thought a knowledge of grammar should be rather a consequence of understanding a language than a handmaid to the knowledge. At the same time her knowledge of Greek construction was so deep that she was able to detect an error into which every translator of Homer had fallen, in making the verb λίσσομαι govern a dative case. (*Iliad*, I. v. 284.)

Elizabeth Carter was resolved, it appears, from the days of her girlhood that she would never marry. Her

father, who had married twice, and had two families to bring up on a very inadequate income, would have liked her to marry, as he feared he might die and leave her unprovided for. When she was not more than twenty he wrote to her: "If you intend never to marry, as I think you plainly intimate in one of your letters, then you certainly ought to live retired, and not appear in the world with an expense which is reasonable upon the prospect of getting a husband, but not otherwise." This is interesting, for one would hardly have expected so pious a clergyman as Dr. Carter to approve of husband-catching as a speculation.

Just ten years after Hannah More's first meeting with Elizabeth Carter, Hayley dedicated to the latter his *Essay on Old Maids*, and sent her a copy on its publication; but, according to the testimony of her nephew, she was neither pleased nor flattered, but greatly shocked at the improprieties which the work contained. She felt, she said, that no compliment to herself could excuse the ridicule thrown upon others.

Like all truly great women, Elizabeth Carter had a high opinion of the capabilities of her own sex. Once, when on a visit to her friend Archbishop Seeker, at Lambeth, she complained to him of the unfair way in which the English translators had rendered the twelfth and thirteenth verses of the fifth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians. She insisted upon it that, for the evident purpose of supporting the superiority of the husband, they had translated the same verb *ἀφεῖναι* and *ἀφείτω* as applied to the husband—"to put away;" and as applied to the wife—"Let her not leave him." The Archbishop denied the fact, and asserted that the words in the original were not the same, but finding her obstinate, "Come with me, Madam Carter," said he at length, "to my study, and be refuted." They went, and his Grace on consulting the passage, instead of being angry that he was found to be in the wrong, said "No, Madam

Carter, it is I who must be refuted, and you are in the right."

Elizabeth Carter was filled with indignation at the attacks made upon Dr. Johnson after the publication of his edition of Shakespeare; and in her old age she was never tired of saying that, not Boswell's accounts of his conversations, but Johnson's own writings, were the proper material from which to draw a true estimate of his character. After his death the following epigram on Elizabeth Carter was found among Johnson's papers, in his own handwriting:—

> "Quid mihi cum Cultu? Probitas inculta mitescit,
> Et juvat Ingenii vita sine rudis.
> Ingenium et mores si pulchra probavit Eliza,
> Quid majus mihi spes ambitiosa dabit?"

That Hannah More was, even at this early stage in her career, quite able to hold her own even in the presence of so great a man as Dr. Johnson, is clear from several of her sister Sally's letters in the winter of 1775, when Hannah was in her thirty-first year. "Tuesday evening," she writes, "we drank tea at Sir Joshua's, with Dr. Johnson. Hannah is certainly a great favourite. She was placed next him, and they had the entire conversation to themselves. They were both in remarkably high spirits; it was certainly her lucky night! I never heard her say so many good things. The old genius was extremely jocular, and the young one very pleasant. You would have imagined we had been at some comedy, had you heard our peals of laughter. They, indeed, tried which could 'pepper the highest,' and it is not clear to me that the lexicographer was really the highest seasoner." Dr. Johnson was then in his sixty-seventh year.

During this visit to London Hannah seems to have done a good deal of sight-seeing. In a letter from Hampton Court to her friend Mrs. Gwatkin, which, though undated, must, from internal evidence, have been written in 1775,

she describes a visit to Wolsey's palace with great enthusiasm: She thinks it "rather like a town than a palace. . . . The private apartments are almost all full; they are all occupied by people of fashion, mostly of quality; and it is astonishing to me that people of large fortune will solicit for them. Mr. Lowndes has apartments next to these, notwithstanding he has an estate of £4000 a year." It has been stated more than once that Hannah More had no eye for the beauties of architecture; in this letter she owns that she is unable to judge of this magnificent building by the rules of architecture or taste, "Yet that cannot destroy the pleasure I receive in viewing it." She is high in her praise of the twenty-six state apartments, excepting only the furniture, "which the iron tooth of time has almost totally destroyed." And she is reminded of Æsop's old woman, who, smelling the lees of a brandy-cask, cried out, "Ah, dear soul! if you are so good now that it is almost over with you, what must you have been when you were in perfection?" She then speaks enthusiastically of the paintings by the greatest of the Italian masters (the originals) which she found upon the walls, and of the works of Vandyke, Lely, Rubens, Guido Rene, and others; and she is delighted with King William's writing-closet, and its ceiling fresco of Endymion and the Moon; "so sweet the attitudes—so soft the colouring—such inimitable graces!"

She was particularly struck with the rich tapestries representing the battles and victories of Alexander and Julius Cæsar; and of the tapestry picture of Diogenes in his tub she says, "The contempt and scorn that animate his countenance, in addressing himself to the victorious Macedonian, delighted me extremely."

She next describes her visit to "the mansion of the tuneful Alexander," and tells how she has "rambled through the immortal shades of Twickenham, and trodden the haunts of the swan of Thames," but she finds

very little merit either in the grotto, house, or gardens, but that they once belonged to one of the greatest poets upon earth." As for the furniture, it is "only genteel; all light linen; not a picture to be seen, and I was sorry to see a library contemptibly small, with only French and English authors, in the house where Pope had lived." It is clear that Hannah More did not share the feeling of Elizabeth Carter with regard to looking at other people's libraries, for that learned lady has left on record in more than one of her letters that nothing bored her so much as merely being shown a library without having the opportunity of taking down the books and reading them.

Hannah also made a pilgrimage to Pope's tomb. "For this purpose I went to the church, and easily found out the monument of one who would not be buried in Westminster Abbey. The inscription, I am afraid, is a little ostentatious, yet I admire it, as I do the epitaph." Of Pope's wish to be buried at Twickenham, she remarks, "I imagine the same motive induced him to be interred here which made Cæsar say, 'he had rather be the first man in a village than the second at Rome.'"

The next day she went to see the seat of the Duke of Newcastle—

"Esher's groves and Claremont's terraced heights,"

and on the way back paid a visit to Mr. Garrick's house, little thinking that some thirty winters of her future life would be passed there. "The situation of his garden pleases me infinitely," she writes. "It is on the banks of the Thames; the temple (in Shakespeare's memory) about thirty or forty yards from it. Here is the famous chair, curiously wrought out of a cherry-tree which really grew in the garden of Shakespeare at Stratford. I sat in it, but caught no ray of inspiration. But what drew and deserved my attention, was a most noble statue of this most original man, in an attitude strikingly pensive—his limbs strongly muscular, his countenance

expressive of some vast conception, and his whole form seeming the bigger for some immense idea with which you supposed his great imagination pregnant. The statue cost five hundred pounds."

In a letter to her old friend Mrs. Gwatkin,[1] to whom she had dedicated *The Search after Happiness*, Hannah wrote in 1775, from rooms in Henrietta Street, Covent Garden: "Here I have been a whole week, to my shame be it spoken, without having given you the least intimation of my existence, or change of situation," after which she alludes to the "bustle and dissipation, and nonsensical flutter of town life" as her excuse for not writing sooner, and then she says: "We have been to see the new comedy of young Sheridan, *The Rivals*. It was very unfavourably received the first night, and he had the prudence to prevent a total defeat, by withdrawing it, and making great and various improvements; the event has been successful, for it is now *better*, though not *very* much liked. For my own part, I think he ought to be treated with great indulgence: much is to be forgiven in an author of three-and-twenty, whose genius is likely to be his principal inheritance. I love him for the sake of his amiable and ingenious mother. On the whole I was tolerably entertained." She has been to see General Burgoyne's play, *The Maid of Oaks*, at the Drury, and remarks that "the scenery was beautiful—the masquerade scene almost as good as at the Pantheon."

The Pantheon in Oxford Street was only opened in 1772. Horace Walpole, writing to Sir H. Mann, in April of the previous year, calls it "the new winter Ranelagh," and says that he took the French ambassador to see it when it was almost finished. "It amazed me myself," he exclaims. "Imagine Balbec in all its glory! The pillars are of artificial Giacol Antica. The ceilings, even

[1] Theophila Palmer, a niece of Sir Joshua Reynolds, was married to Richard Lovell Gwatkin in 1781. He was probably the son of Hannah's old friend.

of the passages, are of the most beautiful stuccos in the best taste of grotesque. The ceilings of the ball-rooms and the panels are painted like Raphael's loggias in the Vatican."

Of Garrick, Hannah now speaks for the first time. He is ill, at Hampton. "If he does not get well enough to act soon, I shall break my heart."

In another letter she says: "Monday we dined, drank tea, and supped, at the amiable Sir Joshua Reynolds's; there was a brilliant circle of both sexes, not in general literary, though partly so. We were not suffered to come away till one." This was a visit, then, of at least eight hours' duration. It would take a very bright company of guests, in our day, to pass so many hours in each other's society, without the aid of music, cards, or some other time-killing occupation and not be bored to extinction.

Hannah tells her friend Mrs. Gwatkin she wishes she could send her a copy of Dr. Johnson's *Journey to the Hebrides*, which is selling well. She has heard from Cadell the publisher that he sold four thousand copies the first week, and adds—"It is an agreeable work, though the subject is sterility itself: he knows how to avail himself of the commonest circumstances, and trifles are no longer trifles when they have passed through his hands. He makes the most entertaining and useful reflexions on every occurrence, and when occurrences fail, he has a never-failing fund in his own accomplished and prolific mind." This book was published in the year 1775. Hannah More's admiration for it never cooled, and we find her recommending it many decades later in her work on the education of the Princess Charlotte.

CHAPTER IV

"SIR ELDRED OF THE BOWER"

During her visit to London in the year 1775, Hannah More was taken by some of her friends to the opera, but the letter she afterwards wrote to her sisters about it clearly shows that this outing had given her very little pleasure, if any at all. She begins thus—

> "Bear me, some god, O quickly bear me hence,
> To wholesome solitude, the nurse of—

'Sense,' I was going to add, in the words of Pope, till I recollected that *pence* had a more appropriate meaning, and was as good a rhyme. This apostrophe broke from me on coming from the opera, the first I ever *did*, the last I trust I ever *shall* go to. For what purpose has the Lord of the Universe made His creature man with a comprehensive mind? Why make him a little lower than the angels? Why give him the faculty of thinking, the powers of wit and memory; and to crown all, an immortal and never-dying spirit? Why all this wondrous waste, this prodigality of bounty, if the mere animal senses of sight and hearing (by which he is not distinguished from the brutes that perish) would have answered the end as well? and yet I find that the same people are seen at the opera every night—an amusement written in a language the greater part of them do not understand, and performed by such a set of beings! . . . Going to the opera, like getting drunk, is a sin that carries its own punishment with it, and that a very severe one."

In the same letter she asks her sisters to convey her thanks to dear Dr. S— "for his seasonable admonition on my last Sunday's engagement at Mrs. Montagu's," and

admits that her own conscience has already been troubling her on that score. Jacob More had been very strict in his observance of the Sabbath, and he had always impressed upon his daughters the importance of keeping the Lord's Day. It will be remembered that he was descended on one side of the family from Presbyterians of the strictest type, and his own mother had been brought up in the Presbyterian faith. Throughout her long life his daughter Hannah clung tenaciously to the ideas with which she had been brought up as regards the observance of Sunday; she became more strict, not less so, as the years went on, as was the case with all the members of the Evangelical party. In her day, as in ours, there must have been many Christian people who argued like Archbishop Laud, that Sunday was not the Sabbath, and that the injunctions contained in the Fourth Commandment were therefore less binding, but she never even alludes to such a way of looking at the matter. Her Sunday, from first to last, is always the Jewish Sabbath transferred to the first day of the week. Until the rise of the Evangelical movement members of the Established Church were not as a rule at all strict in their observance of Sunday. Hannah More had not, at the period we are now studying, come in contact with the Evangelical party. Most of the London friends she was associating with saw no harm in buying their Sunday newspapers, or driving in Hyde Park on a Sunday afternoon.

Mrs. Boscawen had invited Hannah to spend a certain Sunday evening at her house, and before retiring that night she wrote to her sisters: "I have been at Mrs. Boscawen's. Mrs. Montagu, Mrs. Carter, Mrs. Chapone, and myself only were admitted. We spent the time, not as wits, but as reasonable creatures; better characters I trow. Conversation was sprightly but serious. I have not enjoyed an evening so much since I have been in town. There was much sterling sense, and they are all ladies of high character for piety; of which, however, I do not

think their visiting on Sundays any proof: for though their conversation is edifying, the example is bad." And in the same letter she goes on to moralise over the hollowness of this life. "For my part, the more I see of the 'honoured, famed, and great,' the more I see of the littleness, the unsatisfactoriness of all created good; and that no earthly pleasure can fill up the wants of the immortal principle within. One need go no farther than the company I have just left, to be convinced that 'pain is for man,' and that fortune, talents, and science are no exemptions from the universal lot. Mrs. Montagu, eminently distinguished for wit and virtue, 'the wisest where all are wise,' is hastening to insensible decay by a slow but sure hectic. Mrs. Chapone has experienced the severest reverses of fortune; and Mrs. Boscawen's life has been a continual series of afflictions, which may almost bear a parallel with those of the righteous man of Uz."

In the same winter Hannah tells her sisters she is very angry with Burke for a paragraph in his writings against the Dean of Gloucester (Dean Tucker), and she adds—'They seem to think that the man and the politician are different things; but I do not see why a person should not be bound to speak truth in the House of Commons as much as in his own house." In connection with this letter, Mr. Roberts mentions the curious coincidence, often afterwards referred to by Hannah, that Edmund Burke, Dean Tucker, and Mrs. Macaulay, all called upon her in Park Street, Bristol, on the same morning, but fortunately in succession, as they were all at that time writing against one another.

Hannah's next visit to London was in January of the following year, 1776, and this time she was more courted than ever, on account of the success which had attended the publication of *Sir Eldred of the Bower* and *The Bleeding Rock*. The warm reception she had met with in London's literary circles in 1775, had fired her ambition, and on her return home she had said to her sisters, "I

have been so fed with praise and flattering attentions, that I think I will venture to try what is my real value, by writing a slight poem and offering it to Cadell myself." A fortnight later, *Sir Eldred of the Bower* was ready for publication. Adding to it a little poem which she had written several years earlier, she offered them to Mr. Cadell, who at once agreed to take them and to pay her a far larger sum than she had dared to expect, adding that if she could find out how much Goldsmith had received for his *Deserted Village,* he would raise the promised remuneration to the same figure. So began a connection between publisher and author which lasted without a break for nearly twenty-nine years. It was a curious coincidence that her publisher, Mr. Cadell, was born in the same village as Hannah More, though they never met till Hannah had begun to distinguish herself as a writer.

Mr. Roberts and Charlotte Yonge both state that it was in January 1776 that this bargain was made with Cadell, but it must have been in the previous year, or else the letter in which Mrs. Montague praised *Sir Eldred* must be wrongly dated, for it bears the date " Dec. 26, 1775."

In this letter Mrs. Montagu compliments the poetess on the beautiful simplicity of her tale, the propriety of the manners, so suited to ancient times, and the sentiments so natural to the different characters. " Let me beg you, my dear Madam," she writes, " to allow your muse still to adorn British names and British places. Wherever you lead the fairy dance, flowers will spring up. Your Rock will stand unimpaired by ages, as eminent as any in the Grecian Parnassus."

Hannah had sent a copy of her new poems to Edmund Burke's brother Richard, and that gentleman, in writing to thank her, said: " I came to town the night before last, and only then received your most acceptable present. . . . My brother's bookseller, by his direction, sent him your truly elegant and tender performance. The poems

made a great and certainly the best part of our entertainment in the country ; and it was before my judgment was biassed by the flattering attention you were so condescending as to show me. . . ." That Edmund Burke should have ordered her writings from his bookseller before the poetess had time to send him a presentation copy, is a fair testimony to his appreciation of her powers.

It was about this time that Sally More, writing to her sister Patty, said: "From Miss Reynolds we learn that *Sir Eldred* is the theme of conversation in all polite circles, and that the beauteous Bertha has kindled a flame in the cold bosom of Johnson, who declares that her parent has but one fault ; which is, suffering herself to graze on the barren rocks of Bristol, while the rich pastures of London are guarded by no fence which could exclude her from them. . . . I forgot to tell you that Mr. Garrick has read *Sir Eldred* to us ; and henceforth let never man attempt to read before me if he read worse."

While Hannah was enjoying the popularity that these two little poems had brought her she found time to write some delightful letters to her family describing the social life she was so thoroughly enjoying ; letters which, for the true and vivid pictures they present of pleasant scenes that would otherwise have been lost to the world, will ever retain for students of eighteenth-century London a value quite equal in quality to that of the correspondence of Horace Walpole or Madame D'Arblay. In the following letter we see how the Queen of the Blue-stockings was in the habit of mingling learning with levity in her successful little dinner parties:—"Just returned," writes Hannah, "from spending one of the most agreeable days of my life with the female Mæcenas of Hill Street ; she engaged me five or six days ago to dine with her, and had assembled half the wits of the age. The only fault this charming woman has is she is fond of collecting too many of them together at one time. There were nineteen persons assembled at dinner, but after the repast she had a

method of dividing her guests, or rather letting them assort themselves into little groups of five or six each. I spent my time in going from one to the other of these little societies, as I happened more or less to like the subjects they were discussing. Mrs. Scott, Mrs. Montagu's sister, a very good writer, Miss Carter, Mrs. Barbauld, and a man of letters whose name I have forgotten, made up one of these little parties. When we had canvassed two or three subjects, I stole off and joined in with the next group, which was composed of Mrs. Montagu, Dr. Johnson, and the Provost of Dublin, and two other ingenious men. In this party there was a diversity of opinions, which produced a great deal of good argument and reasoning. There were several other groups less interesting to me, as they were composed more of rank than of talent, and it was amusing to see how the people of sentiment singled out each other, and how the fine ladies and pretty gentlemen naturally slid into each other's society."

No one enjoyed the society of intellectual women more than Dr. Johnson, and when intellect was joined to youth and good looks, the sage found them altogether irresistible. So great, indeed, was his affection for Fanny Burney, after the appearance of her *Evelina*, that people actually spread a rumour that he was about to marry her; in one of her published letters to Mrs. Montagu about this time we find Elizabeth Carter asking her friend if there is any truth in the report! In the letter from which we have quoted above we find Hannah laughingly adding—"I had the happiness to carry Dr. Johnson home from Hill Street, though Mrs. Montagu publicly declared she did not think it prudent to trust us together, with such a declared affection on both sides. She said she was afraid of a Scotch elopement. He has invited himself to drink tea with us to-morrow, that we may read *Sir Eldred* together. I shall not tell you what he said of it, but to me the best part of it was that

he repeats all the best stanzas by heart, with the energy though not with the grace of a Garrick."

We have already seen that David Garrick was quite as much attracted to Hannah More, at their first meeting, as Dr. Johnson had been. In both cases the friendship which had sprung up so suddenly was only ended by death. Garrick had been one of the few pupils placed under Johnson's care when he opened his boarding-school in the year 1736, before he came to London to seek his fortune. Garrick, who had at first tried to make his way as a wine merchant, or, as Foote described it, "by living in a cellar with three quarts of vinegar," had not only found his vocation as an actor, but had become the brightest star in the theatrical world before Johnson began to emerge from his obscurity. Some writers have tried to make out that Johnson was never able to forgive his pupil for outstripping him in the race for success. Hannah More's letters, however, show that there was far more cordiality between these two great men than Boswell would lead us to suppose. Both excelled in one particular—in the art of conversation; and there can be little doubt that it was her bright and witty conversational powers which first attracted them to Hannah More. Garrick had French blood in his veins; he was a grandson of one of the exiles of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and his name had come from the French name of "Garrique." For sprightliness in conversation, as Johnson himself said of him, Garrick had no rival, and this talent he may have owed to the Celtic strain in his blood.

Every word that has come down to us about David Garrick is of priceless value, because so little has come down, and so much has been lost. No life of this unique personality worthy of the name has ever appeared, or can ever appear, because of the scarcity of material. During his exceptionally happy married life, he and Mrs. Garrick were hardly separated a day, so there was

never any occasion for letters to pass between them. The story of Garrick's marriage reads like a far-fetched romance. In the year 1746, a few weeks before the battle of Culloden, some young Scotch gentlemen who had been studying at a Dutch University travelled England in the company of two foreigners, one of whom was "a handsome page." The page suffered from a violent fit of sea-sickness while they were crossing the North Sea, and being very frightened at the roughness of the voyage, called out in French to know if there was any danger. The Scotchmen at once recognised the voice as that of a woman, and the discovery was followed by the disclosure of the page's identity. He was in reality no page at all, but a young lady—a dancer from Vienna, who was travelling to England under that disguise to try her fortunes on the London stage. She had been engaged to appear at the little theatre in the "Y Hay," and she gave her name as "Mademoiselle Violette," the daughter of a respectable citizen of Vienna. There is, however, another story relating her identity, which makes her out to be of royal blood. It was reported at the time that this young and beautiful dancer, having been taken to the royal palace at Vienna to instruct the royal children in the art, the impression she produced was so favourable that Maria Theresa became uneasy, and, wishing to get her safely out of the country, sent her to England with good introductions. Mr. Percy Fitzgerald, who gave the subject considerable attention in his study of Garrick, did not credit this report, but believed her to be a young actress, sister to Ferdinand Charles, of the Vienna Ballet. However that may be, the introduction she brought to the Earl of Burlington led to her being received into the Burlington family with a warmth that soon ripened into affection. On the first night of her appearance in London the King gave her his patronage, a sure proof that she had high influence to back her. She was talked of everywhere, and soon became the guest of some of the most

aristocratic families in the country. In the year 1747 she was still the great attraction, and the Countesses of Burlington and Talbot vied with one another in their offers of hospitality to this attractive young dancer. She was the guest of Lady Carlisle's choicest supper-parties, and we find her described by Horace Walpole in a letter to George Montagu, dated 1746, as "the finest and most admired dancer in the world." Such was the lady who left the popularity of the stage to become the wife of David Garrick, the greatest actor of his age, the man whom Goldsmith described as "an abridgment of all that is pleasant in man."

David Garrick may almost be said to have lived two lives at the same time, so entirely did he divide his home and social life from that part of his life which was connected with the theatre and the stage. Hannah More, after she had enjoyed his hospitality for several years, and been his guest for months, remarked that she had never met an actor or an actress but once in his house.

When Hannah More met Garrick for the first time he was sixty years of age, and already contemplated retiring into private life. So much had he done for the drama during his managership of Drury Lane Theatre that Murphy, who had acted with him, tells us: "In his time the theatre engrossed the minds of men to such a degree that it may now be said that there existed in England a fourth estate—King, Lords, Commons, and Drury Lane Playhouse." One great service that Garrick had done for his generation was his bringing Shakespeare once more to the front. Shakespeare was Garrick's hero, and those who honoured Garrick honoured Shakespeare. In this respect Garrick became a great reformer of the public taste and a restorer of dramatic literature. We have only to study the pages of Addison to learn how low the stage had fallen before Garrick's time.

Not only did Garrick revive an interest in Shakespeare's plays, but in everything connected with that

great poet. It was he who promoted the Shakespeare Jubilee, held at Stratford-on-Avon, in 1769. The house in which Shakespeare was born was spoken of at that time as a little, small old house, and there were no funds or subscriptions towards its preservation, or for the purchase of the ground on which it stood. Mr. Fitzgerald tells us how Garrick, who was the link between the stage and the fashionable world, by his name and personal influence drew many thousands of fine ladies and gentlemen to Shakespeare's birthplace to take part in his festival. Garrick took dresses from Drury Lane Theatre to Stratford for the fancy dress ball, and people paid four guineas apiece for the loan of these costumes. Garrick had pledged himself to share the risk of loss with the corporation of that neglected little town, and all profits were to go to the perpetuation of Shakespeare's memory.

People poured into Stratford from every town in the kingdom, and many had the greatest difficulty in finding shelter for their heads. The accommodation for the guests was wretched to a degree, and the charges of the townspeople were out of all proportion to the comforts they had to offer. Foote, the English Aristophanes, complained that he was charged nine guineas for six hours' sleep, and had to pay two shillings for asking a bumpkin the hour. Rain poured throughout the festival, and "nothing more dismal could be conceived than for a number of persons of quality to be thus shut up in a little country town without resource or even room."[1]

In the spring of 1776 Hannah More wrote to her sister: "Let the Muses shed tears, for Garrick has this day sold the patent of Drury Lane Theatre, and will never act after this winter. *Sic transit gloria mundi!* He retires with all his blushing honours thick about him, his laurels as green as in their early spring. Who shall supply his loss to the stage? Who shall now hold the master-key of the human heart? Who direct the passions with more

[1] See Fitzgerald, *op. cit.*

than magic power? Who purify the stage? And who, in short, shall direct and nurse my dramatic muse?"

The day before she wrote the above Hannah had dined with the Garricks and spent the evening in the company of Johnson. "To enjoy Dr. Johnson," she writes, "one must have him to oneself, as he seldom cares to speak in mixed parties. Our tea was not over till nine; we then fell upon *Sir Eldred*, he read both poems through, suggested some little alterations in the first, and did me the honour to write one whole stanza; but in the *Rock* he has not altered a word. Though only a tea visit, he staid with us till twelve. I was quite at my ease, and never once asked him to eat (drink he never does anything but tea); while you, I daresay, would have fidgeted to death, and would have sent half over the town for chicken and oysters, and asparagus and Madeira. You see how frugal it is to be well-bred and not to think of such a vulgar renovation as eating and drinking."

In her next home letter, Hannah once more complains of the fashions of that day: "Again I am annoyed by the foolish absurdity of the present mode of dress. Some ladies carry on their heads a large quantity of fruit, and yet they would despise a poor useful member of society who carried it there for the purpose of selling it for bread. Some, at the back of their perpendicular caps, hang four or five ostrich feathers of different colours. 'Spirit of Addison! thou pure and gentle shade, arise. . . .' O that thy master-spirit, speaking and chiding in the graceful page, could recall the blushes and collect the scattered remnants of female modesty!"[1]

The following extracts from a letter written from London by one of Hannah's sisters at this period show a good deal of merry humour:—

[1] It was about this time that Horace Walpole remarked in a letter that the ladies were wearing almost as many feathers as the savages who wore no other clothing.

"If a wedding should take place before our return, don't be surprised—between the mother of *Sir Eldred* and the father of my much-loved *Irene;* nay, Mrs. Montagu says if tender words are the precursors of connubial engagements, we may expect great things; for it is nothing but 'child' —'little fool'—'love' and 'dearest.' After much critical discourse he turns round to me, and with one of his most amiable looks, which must be seen to form the least idea of it, he says, 'I have heard that you are engaged in the useful and honourable employment of teaching young ladies.' Upon which, with all the same ease, familiarity, and confidence we should have shown had only our own dear Dr. Stonehouse been present, we entered upon the history of our birth, parentage, and education; showing how we were born with more desires than guineas; and how, as years increased our appetites, the cupboard at home began to grow too small to gratify them; and how, with a bottle of water, a bed, and a blanket, we set out to seek our fortunes; and how we found a great house with nothing in it; and how it was like to remain so till, looking into our own knowledge-boxes, we happened to find a little *larning*, a good thing when land is gone, or rather, none: and so at last, by giving a little of this *larning* to those who had less, we got a good store of gold in return; but how, alas! we wanted the wit to keep it. 'I love you both,' cried the enamorato—'I love you all five—I never was at Bristol —I will come on purpose to see you. What! five women live happily together! I will come and see you—I have spent a happy evening—I am glad I came—God for ever bless you; you live lives to shame duchesses.' He took leave with so much warmth and tenderness that we were quite affected at his manner."

When we remember how comparatively small had been the output of Hannah More's muse at this time, we cannot help being surprised at the amount of respect, adulation, and attention paid to her by the most dis-

tinguished members of London's choicest literary circles. "If Hannah's head stands proof against all the adulation and kindness of the great folks here," writes her sister, "why, then, I will venture to say that nothing of this kind will hurt her hereafter." Mrs. Barbauld had published her first book of poems three years before, and, as we have seen, Hannah had already met her at Mrs. Montagu's, but there is nothing to indicate, either in her biography or her letters, that she received anything like the attention and flattery that was lavished upon Hannah More, who, in age, was three years her junior.

In the letter from which we have just quoted, Miss Sally More (for we are sure it is she, though no writer's name is appended) tells an interesting little literary anecdote: "Mrs. Medalle (Sterne's daughter) sent to all the correspondents of her deceased father, begging the letters which he had written to them; among other wits, she sent to Wilkes with the same request. He sent for answer, that as there happened to be nothing extraordinary in those he had received, he had burnt or lost them. On which, the faithful editor of her father's works sent back to say, that if Mr. Wilkes would be so good as to write a few letters in imitation of her father's style, it would do just as well, and she would insert them." In those days Sterne was much read and never discussed; never, at least, in mixed society. At the appearance of *Tristram Shandy* some of the leading blue-stockings, male and female, had refused to have the book in their libraries, and Mrs. Delany had been one of these. This was a time when the sorrowing relatives and friends of every person who had not lived and died in utter obscurity felt it their sacred duty to follow up the funeral with the publication of a volume of letters, and one wonders, on seeing the way in which Sterne's daughter was ready to fill up gaps in her father's correspondence, whether this bright idea originated and ended with her, or whether she was simply following a precedent!

The latter half of the eighteenth century was the age of letter-writing. Never before had such rich crops of correspondence been forthcoming after the decease of distinguished persons. Comparing the memoirs of the first half of the nineteenth century with those of the previous fifty years, we are struck with the way in which the diary has taken the place once occupied by the correspondence. This is especially noticeable in the case of religious characters. After the rise of the Evangelical party we find a great leaning towards the keeping of a diary, as a record of heart searchings, and the general experiences connected with religious life. It would be interesting if we could know whether the writers of these diaries and journals turned in their graves with resentment when their most private thoughts and feelings were made public property.

When Horace Walpole's executors were preparing to publish his letters they applied to Hannah More for such of his letters to her as she was willing to have published; it is well known that Horace Walpole intended that his correspondence should be given to the public—in fact he made fair copies of many of them with that intent. Elizabeth Carter, born in the same year as Horace Walpole (1717), expressed a wish that her letters might not be published after her decease. Her nephew and biographer respected her desire at first, and when writing her life he only gave a few extracts from her letters, but a few years later he saw fit to publish two volumes of his aunt's correspondence. Horace Walpole refers to the report that five hundred letters written by Madame de Genlis had just been discovered in a château that she had inhabited, apparently stowed away for the use of some future biographer. Yet the fact that all who had made any name in the world naturally expected to have their letters published after their death must have prevented their writing to their friends in the same frank and open way in which they would have written had they

felt they were putting them on paper for one pair of eyes alone. How could any one chat freely with even their most intimate friends if they knew that every word was being taken down by a shorthand writer for future publication ?

CHAPTER V

FRIENDSHIP WITH THE GARRICKS

Mrs. Garrick had taken as warm a liking to Hannah More as her husband had done. Almost every letter written by the sisters at this period contains some allusion to the kind attentions shown them by that lady. One day she alters her dinner-hour to suit their convenience, another day she calls for them in her carriage to take them to a picture sale, and on a third occasion she invites them to her home at Hampton. "We have been passing three days at the temple of taste, nature, and Shakespeare, and Garrick," writes Martha More, "where everything that could please the ear, charm the eye, and gratify the understanding, passes in quick succession. From dinner to midnight he entertained us in a manner infinitely agreeable. He read to us all the whimsical correspondence, in prose and verse, which, for many years, he has carried on with the first geniuses of this age. I have now seen him in his mellower light, when the world has been shaken off. He says he longs to enter into himself, and to study the more important duties of life, which he is determined upon doing: that his whole *domestique* shall be both a credit to himself and an example to others. The next time we go Hannah is to carry some of her writing; she is to have a little table to herself, and to continue her studies; and he is to do the same."

Little did the sisters foresee that this visit was the first of a series, that was to extend over more than thirty years, and that in Mr. Garrick's house Hannah was to write some of her most successful productions. That a

lady who had enjoyed the reputation of being the best dancer of her day, and who was a staunch member of the Roman Catholic Church, should have found so much in common with a young woman brought up so puritanically as Hannah More had been is not without its significance. Had Hannah been at that time or later in the slightest degree bigoted or narrow, the friendship could neither have been formed in the first place nor could it have lasted for thirty-five years without a break.

Leslie tells us that Sir Joshua Reynolds painted no less than seven portraits of Garrick—"the man who, of all men that ever lived, presents the most perfect type of the actor; quick in sympathy, vivid in observation, with a body and mind so plastic that they could take every mould, and give back the very form and pressure of every passion, fashion, action: delighted to give delight, and spurred to ever higher effort by the reflexion of the effect produced on others, no matter whether his audience were the crowd of an applauding theatre, a table full of noblemen and wits, a nursery group of children, or a solitary black boy in an area (a chimney-sweep)." Leslie, himself a portrait painter, adds—"To paint Garrick was to come into direct competition with all the notable portrait painters of the time. Everybody painted Garrick. His house at the Adelphi was full of portraits of himself which were either gifts or purchases."

The Garricks had two houses—one, designed by the brothers Adam, in the Adelphi Terrace, and one at Hampton; each was furnished and kept up in a most luxurious style, money being no object with Garrick in the latter half of his life. "I dined at the Adelphi yesterday," writes Hannah. "It was a particular occasion—an annual meeting, where none but men are usually asked. I was, however, of the party, and an agreeable day it was to me. I have seldom heard so much wit, under the banner of so much decorum. I mention this, because

I was told it was a day of licence, and that everybody was to say what they pleased. Colman and Dr. Shomberg were of the party; they were chiefly old doctors of divinity. I had a private whisper that I was due there again to-day to assist at the celebration of the birthday. We had a little snug dinner in the library. At six I begged leave to come home, as I expected my *petite assemblée* a little after seven. Mrs. Garrick offered me all her fine things, but, as I hate admixtures of finery and meanness, I refused everything except a little cream, and a few sorts of cakes. They came at seven. The *dramatis personæ* were Mrs. Boscawen, Mrs. Garrick, and Miss Reynolds; my *beaux* were Dr. Johnson, Dean Tucker, and last, but not least in our love, David Garrick. You know that wherever Johnson is, the confinement to the tea-table is rather a durable situation; and it was an hour and a half before I got my enlargement. However my ears were opened, though my tongue was locked, and they all stayed till near eleven. Garrick was the very soul of the company, and I never saw Johnson in such perfect good humour. Sally knows that we can never properly enjoy the company of these two unless they are together. There is great truth in this remark; for after the Dean and Mrs. Boscawen were withdrawn, and the rest stood up to go, Johnson and Garrick began a close encounter, telling old stories 'e'en from their boyish days,' at Litchfield. We all stood round the table above an hour, laughing in defiance of every rule of decorum and Chesterfield. I believe we should not have thought of sitting down or of parting, had not an impertinent watchman been saucily vociferous. Johnson outstaid them all, and sat with me half-an-hour."

It seems that *Sir Eldred of the Bower* had made its first appearance in a periodical called *The Monthly Review*, for in the same letter Hannah says: "After dinner Garrick took up *The Monthly Review* and read *Sir Eldred* with all his pathos and all his graces. I think I never

was so ashamed in my life; but he read it so superlatively that I cried like a child. Only think what a scandalous thing, to cry at the reading of one's own poetry! I could have beaten myself; for it looked as if I thought it very moving, which I can truly say was far from being the case. But the beauty of the jest lies in this: Mrs. Garrick twinkled as well as I, and made as many apologies for crying at her husband's reading as I did for crying at my own verses. *She* got out of the scrape by pretending she was touched at the story, and *I* by saying the same thing of the reading. It furnished us with a great laugh at the catastrophe, when it would really have been decent to have been a little sorrowful." Where could we find a prettier peep into a little eighteenth-century scene than Hannah More has preserved for us in this humorous description of her tea-party?

Hannah's ambition would not let her pass her days in mere pleasure, even when she was in London and being made so much of. "Would you believe it?" she writes. "In the midst of all the pomps and vanities of this wicked town, I have taken it into my head to study like a dragon; I read four or five hours every day, and wrote ten hours yesterday. How long this will last I do not know—but I fear no longer than the bad weather." And then she gives an amusing little story which must have been literally true, though it seems hardly credible that such ignorance of the Bible could have been possible. Sir Joshua Reynolds had just finished painting his picture of the prophet Samuel—the child Samuel kneeling in prayer, with his face upturned as he hears the divine call. "Sir Joshua tells me," she writes, "that he is exceedingly mortified when he shows this picture to some of the great—they ask him who Samuel was! I told him he must get somebody to make an *Oratorio* of Samuel, and then it would not be vulgar to confess they knew something of him. He said he was glad to find that I was intimately acquainted with that devoted prophet.

He has also done a St. John that bids fair for immortality. I told him that I hope the poets and painters will at last bring the Bible into fashion, and that people will get to like it from taste, though they are insensible to its spirit, and afraid of its doctrines. I love this great genius for not being ashamed to take his subjects from the most unfashionable of all books."

It is perfectly clear, from the very earliest of her published letters, that Hannah More was never one to care for what we should call the gaieties of a London life; we never find her at a dance or at Ranelagh; it was the intellectual life of the capital that drew her thither. "Mrs. Garrick," she now writes, "has obtained a ticket to carry me to the Pantheon with her and a party; but I could not get the better of my repugnance to these sort of places, and she was so good as to excuse me. I find my dislike of what are called public diversions greater than ever, except a play; and when Garrick has left the stage, I could be very well contented to relinquish plays also, and to live in London without ever again setting foot in a public place."

That remarkable marriage between the greatest actor of the century and the finest dancer of the year had turned out well; from first to last it was one of the happiest unions that could well be imagined. As we have said, the pair were never separated for a day during the whole of their wedded life; absence in their case had not been required to make the heart grow fonder; not a letter appears to have passed between them as man and wife. Hannah More, visiting them at their beautiful home at Hampton in 1776, was charmed to see how well this happy couple were suited to each other, mind to mind and soul to soul. While seated one day in the temple they had erected in their garden to the memory of Shakespeare, she composed a sonnet for their coming birthday. Garrick's house stood upon the banks of the Thames, and the temple was only forty yards from

DAVID GARRICK AND HIS WIFE

From an engraving after the portrait by W. Hogarth

the water. It is to the river that the sonnet is addressed, and as she tells her sister, when enclosing a copy of the verses, it was written within the space of an hour. Happy indeed must the great actor's married life have been to elicit so sweet a tribute from so sincere and truthful a muse as that of Hannah More—

"O silver Thames, O gentle river, tell,
Since first thy green waves through yon meadow strayed,
Hast thou a more harmonious pair surveyed
Than in these fairy-haunted gardens dwell?

I sing not of his muse, for well I ween
My song's unmarked where every bard approves,
Nor of his magic powers, which must be seen,
Not told—for telling lessens what it loves.

Nor do I celebrate her form or face—
Inglorious praise! for other nymphs are fair,
And other nymphs may boast a transient grace;
Though they must boast it when she is not there:—

Back to thy source, thou, gentle Thames, shalt flow,
Ere soul more tuned to soul, or mind to mind,
Thy margin ever green shall proudly show,
Or in her bands celestial concord bind."

The Garricks had become so much attached to Hannah that they would not hear of her continuing to live in rooms on her return to town; she was to make her home with them, and right gladly did she accept their kind offer. She playfully describes the proposed move to her sisters at Bristol: "When I come back from Hampton I shall change my lodgings; not that I have any particular objection to these, but those I have taken are much more airy, large, and elegant: besides the use, when I please, of the whole house, I shall have a bed-chamber and a dressing-room for my own particular company; the master and mistress are themselves well-behaved, sensible people, and keep good company; besides, they

are fond of books, and can read, and have a shelf of books which they will lend me. The situation is pleasant and healthy—the centre house in the Adelphi. Add to this, it is not a common lodging house, they are careful whom they take in, and will have no people of bad character, or who keep irregular hours; so that on the whole, for the little time I remain in town, I think I shall be more comfortable in my next lodgings."

Hannah's first letter from her new quarters is full of interesting gossip. She has met Mr. Berenger, who had been for many years Gentleman of the Horse and Equerry to King George, and who had made his name in the literary world by his *History of Horsemanship*. Hannah remarks that she likes Mr. Berenger prodigiously, and adds: "Mr. Boswell (Corsican Boswell) was here last night; he is a very agreeable, good-natured man; he perfectly adores Johnson; they have this day set out together for Oxford, Litchfield, &c., that the doctor may take leave of all his old friends and acquaintances previous to his great expedition across the Alps. I lament his undertaking such a journey at his time of life, with beginning infirmities; I hope he will not leave his bones on classic ground." She further tells that she has now three rooms to herself; that David Hume is at the point of death in a jaundice; and that Cadell has circulated six thousand of Price's book.

The friends who gathered under the Garricks' hospitable roof were many of them members of the highest aristocracy. There was in Garrick's circle as thorough a mixture of brains and titles as could well be met with. Sometimes Hannah found these two qualities united in the same individual, but oftener than not they were divided. At one gathering she had Lord and Lady Camden and their daughters, Lady Chatham and her daughters, and the Dean of Derry and lady. She describes Lord Camden as resembling an elderly physician, and thinks there is something of genius about his nose, adding,

"But lords delight me not, nor ladies neither, unless they are very chosen ones."

In the same letter Hannah tells an extraordinary story that is just then in circulation:—"A relative of the Duchess of Chandos died at the Duchess's a few days ago, at the card-table: she was dressed most sumptuously; they stripped off her diamonds, stuck her upright in a coach, put in two gentlemen with her, and sent her home two hours after she was dead."

Card-playing was one of the chief amusements in fashionable circles, then as now. "A most magnificent hotel in St James's Street was opened last night," she writes, "for the first time by the name of *Savoir Vivre*; none but people of the very first rank were there, so you may conclude the diversion was cards; and in one night, the very first time the rooms were ever used, the enormous sum of sixty thousand pounds was lost! Heaven reform us!"

Hannah More does not appear to have ever played a game of cards; apart from any moral scruples that she may have had, it was a form of passing the time that never appealed to her. Cards were even objectionable to her, as something which interfered with the amusement she liked best of all—conversation. Persons gifted with conversational powers above the average have rarely, if ever, been card-players. Even in our own day, the day of bridge, I can only think of one exception to this universal rule—the case of a Parisian lady of brilliant conversational powers, whose writings are very popular both in our country and in her own; she is a great card-player.

"We had the other night a *conversazione* at Mrs. Boscawen's," she writes. "What a comfort for me that none of my friends play cards! Soame Jenyns and the learned and ingenious Mr. Cambridge were of the party. We had a few sensible ladies, and a very agreeable day, till the world broke in upon us, and made us too large for conversation."

On another occasion she dines with Captain (afterwards Lord Barham) and Mrs. Middleton, and recommends a translation of Saurin's sermons for their perusal. "How nobly eloquent they are" (Saurin's sermons), she writes. "One little peculiarity I remark—his more frequent use of the word vice than generally occurs in religious writings. I think sin is a theological, vice a moral, and crime a judicial term. There are so few people I meet with in this good town to whom one can venture to recommend sermons, that the opportunity is not to be lost; though the misfortune is that those who are most willing to read them happen to be the very people who least want them."

Mrs. Boscawen, so often mentioned in Hannah's letters, was the widow of Admiral Boscawen, famous for having defeated the French fleet off Toulon. One of her daughters had married the Duke of Beaufort; all three ladies were much attached to Hannah, and the Duchess called upon her in her gilt chariot, with four footmen, just after she had taken up her quarters with the Garricks. "It is not possible for anything on earth to be more agreeable to my taste than my present manner of living!" she writes enthusiastically, "I am so much at my ease; have a great many hours at my own disposal; read my own books, and see my own friends; and whenever I please, may join the most polished and delightful society in the world! Our breakfasts are little literary societies. There is generally company at meals, as they think it saves time, by avoiding the necessity of seeing people at other seasons. Mr. Garrick sets the highest value upon his time of anybody I ever knew. From dinner to tea we laugh, chat, and talk nonsense; the rest of his time is generally devoted to study. I detest and avoid public places more than ever, and should make a miserably bad fine lady! What most people come to London *for*, would keep me *from* it. Garrick's verses on *Sir Eldred* make a great noise here; I enclose them."

Garrick always showed particular pleasure when he found that anything good was the work of a woman. When women brought him their plays he again and again took endless pains to produce them successfully. It was because the author of *Sir Eldred* was a woman that he wrote the following lines :—

ON "SIR ELDRED OF THE BOWER"

By Roscius

I

Far from the reach of mortal grief,
Well, Stanhope, art thou fled ;
Nor couldst thou, lord, now gain belief,
Tho' rising from the dead.

II

Thy wit a female champion braves,
And blasts thy critic power ;
She comes !—and in her hand she waves
Sir Eldred of the Bower.

III

The victor's palm aloft she bears,
And sullen foes submit ;
The laurel crown from man she tears,
And routs each lordly wit.

IV

"A female work if this should prove,"
Cries out the beaten foe ;
"'Tis Pallas from the head of Jove,
Complete from top to toe.

V

"With feeling, elegance and force
Unite their matchless power ;
And prove that from a heavenly source
Springs *Eldred of the Bower.*"

VI

"True," cried the god of verse, "'tis mine,
And now the farce is o'er ;
To vex proud man I wrote each line,
And gave them Hannah More."

But Garrick was anxious that the young poetess should go on to do greater things. "Alas! I dare not lie in bed in the morning," she writes, "for the Garricks are as much my conscience here as the doctor is at Bristol (Dr. Stonehouse). A few evenings ago we were at Mrs. Vesey's; Tessier read; we were a moderate party; not forty: the Duchess-Dowager of Beaufort was there, Lady Betty Compton, Lord and Lady Spencer, Lord and Lady Bateman, a dozen other lords and ladies, for aught I know. The old Duchess looks amazingly well; I do not know a finer woman of her age. We expect a large party every minute to breakfast, all the sensible, ingenious French folks . . . with Lord North, and I find Mr. Boswell called upon you at Bristol, with Dr. Johnson; he told me so this morning when he breakfasted here."

There is an interesting paragraph about Mrs. Garrick in a letter written by Mrs. Delaney, in the year 1770, several years before Hannah had been introduced to the Garricks. She says: "As to Mrs. Garrick" (with whom she had been staying), "the more one sees her the better one must like her; she seems never to depart from a perfect propriety of behaviour, accompanied with good taste and gentleness of manners, and I cannot help looking upon her as a wonderful creature, considering all circumstances relating to her."

The Garricks ran down to Hampton whenever they wanted a little country air, and they took Hannah with them. "We have been again spending three days at Hampton," she writes. "On the first, we were visited by our noble neighbours, the Pembrokes (Earl and Countess of Pembroke), and on the third we dined at Richmond, at Sir Joshua's, with a very agreeable party. It was select, though much too large to please me. There was hardly a person in the company that I would not have chosen as eminently agreeable; but I would not have chosen them all together. Mr. Gibbon, Mr. Elliot, Edmund, Richard, and William Burke, Lord Mahon, David Garrick, and Sir Joshua."

A little later she writes—" I wish it were possible for me to give you the slightest idea of the scene I was present at yesterday. Garrick would make me take his ticket to go to the trial of the Duchess of Kingston ; a sight which, for beauty and magnificence, exceeded anything which those who were never present at a coronation, or a trial by peers, can have the least notion of. Mrs. Garrick and I were in full dress by seven. At eight we went to the Duke of Newcastle's, whose house adjoins Westminster Hall, in which he has a large gallery, communicating with the apartments in his house. You will imagine the bustle of five thousand people getting into one hall ! yet in all this hurry we walked in tranquilly. When they were all seated, and the king-at-arms had commanded silence on pain of imprisonment (which, however, was very ill observed), the gentleman of the black rod was commanded to bring in his prisoner. Elizabeth, calling herself Duchess-Dowager of Kingston, walked in, led by the black rod and Mr. la Roche, curtseying profoundly to her judges. When she bent, the lord steward called out, ' Madam, you may rise,' which was taking her up before she was down. The peers made her a slight bow. The prisoner was dressed in deep mourning ; a black hood on her head ; her hair modestly dressed and powdered ; a black silk sacque, with crape trimmings ; black gauze, deep ruffles, and black gloves. The counsel spoke about an hour and a quarter each. . . . The fair victim had four virgins in white behind the bar. She imitated her great predecessor, Mrs. Rudd, and affected to write very often, though I plainly perceived she only wrote as they do their love epistles on the stage, without forming a letter. I must not omit one of the best things. We had only to open a door, to get a very fine cold collation of all sorts of meats and wines, with tea—a privilege confined to those who belonged to the Duke of Newcastle. I fancy the peeresses would have been glad of our places at the trial, for I saw Lady Derby

and the Duchess of Devonshire with their workbags full of good things. Their rank and dignity did not exempt them from the 'villainous appetites of eating and drinking.' Foote says that the Empress of Russia (Catherine II.), the Duchess of Kingston, and Mrs. Rudd are the three most extraordinary women in Europe; but the Duchess disdainfully, and I think unjustly, excludes Mrs. Rudd from the honour of deserving to make one in the triple alliance. The Duchess has but small remains of that beauty of which kings and princes were once so enamoured. She looked very much like Mrs. Prichard; she is large and ill-shaped; there was nothing white but her face, and had it not been for that she would have looked like a bale of bombazeen. There was a great deal of ceremony, a great deal of splendour, and a great deal of nonsense; they adjourned upon the most foolish pretences imaginable, and did nothing with such an air of business as was truly ridiculous. I forgot to tell you the Duchess was taken ill, but performed it badly."

Thus opened the famous trial of the Duchess-Dowager of Kingston for bigamy. Hannah tells her sisters that even the prospect of an accommodation with America is not occasioning so much talk as this trial. "For my part," she adds, "I cannot see why there should be so much ceremony used, to know whether an infamous woman has one or two husbands. I think a *lieutenant de police* would be a better judge for her than the peers, and I do not see why she should not be tried by Sir John Fielding, as a profligate of less note would have been." And a few days later she writes, "I have the great satisfaction of telling you that Elizabeth, calling herself Duchess-Dowager of Kingston, was this very afternoon *undignified* and *unduchessed*, and very narrowly escaped being burned in the hand. . . . All the peers, but two or three (who chose to withdraw), exclaimed with great emphasis, 'Guilty, upon my honour!' except

the Duke of N——, who said, 'Guilty erroneously, but not intentionally.' Great nonsense, by the bye; but peers are privileged."

What more attractive sketch of the character and social influence of her friend David Garrick could we have than the following?—"On Tuesday Lord and Lady Pembroke dined with us. The Countess is a pretty woman, and my Lord a good-humoured, lively, chatty man; but Roscius (Garrick) was, as usual, the life and soul of the company, and always says so many home things pointed at the vices and follies of those with whom he converses, but in so indirect, well-bred, and good-humoured a manner, that everybody must love him, and none but fools are ever offended, or will expose themselves so much as to own they are."

Garrick was now preparing to retire into private life. "On Wednesday," writes Hannah," we had a very large party to dinner, consisting chiefly of French persons of distinction and talents, who are come over to take a last look at the beams of the great dramatic sun before he sets. We had *beaux esprits, femmes sçavantes,* academicians, and no English person except Mr. Gibbon, the Garricks, and myself. We had not one English sentence the whole day."

This was the year in which Gibbon completed and published the early volumes of his great work, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,* and with this task accomplished he was able to enjoy a little of the delightful social life which always surrounded the Garricks, whether at Hampton or in their town house. What would we not give to hear some of the conversation that passed between the great actor, the grave historian, and the vivacious young poetess! It was just at this period that Horace Walpole wrote, in a letter to Mason, the biographer of Gray—"Lo, there has just appeared a truly classic work; a history, not majestic like Livy, nor compressed like Tacitus; not stamped with character, like Clarendon;

not pointed like Voltaire, but as accurate as he is inexact, modest as he is trenchant, and sly as Montesquieu, without being so *recherché*. The style is as smooth as a Flemish picture, and the muscles are concealed, and only for natural purposes, not exaggerated, like Michael Angelo's, to show the painter's skill in anatomy; not composed of the limbs of clowns of different nations, like Dr. Johnson's heterogeneous monsters. This book is Mr. Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*." When it came to Hannah More's turn to criticise Gibbon, she was greatly shocked by his attitude towards the Christian religion, as we shall see when we come to her letters on that subject.

There is yet another reference to the Duchess of Kingston: "This morning Lord Camden breakfasted with us. He was very entertaining. He is very angry that the Duchess of Kingston was not burned in the hand. He says, as he was once a professed lover of hers, he thought it would have looked ill-natured and ungallant for him to propose it; but that he should have acceded to it most heartily, though he believes he should have recommended a cold iron."

Hannah's ardent wish to see Garrick in *Hamlet* is at last realised. She had prolonged her visit to London till the month of May for this purpose, and we have her own words as to the fulfilment of her expectations. "I imagine my last was not so ambiguous but that you saw well enough I staid in town to see *Hamlet*, and I will venture to say, that it was such an entertainment as will probably never again be exhibited to an admiring world. But this general praise can give you no idea of my feelings; and particular praise would be injurious to his excellencies. In every part he filled the whole soul of the spectator, and transcended the most finished idea of the poet. The requisites for *Hamlet* are not only various but opposed. In him they are all united, and, as it were, concentrated. One thing I must particularly

remark, that, whether in the simulation of madness, in the sinkings of despair, in the familiarity of friendship, in the whirlwind of passion, or in the meltings of tenderness, he never once forgot he was a prince; and in every variety of situation and transition of feeling, you discovered the highest polish of fine breeding and courtly manners. Hamlet experiences the conflict of many passions and affections, but filial love ever takes the lead; *that* is the great point from which he sets out, and to which he returns; the others are all contingent and subordinate to it, and are cherished or renounced, as they promote or obstruct the operation of this leading principle. Had you seen with what exquisite art and skill Garrick maintained the subserviency of the less to the greater interests, you would agree with me, of what importance to the perfection of acting is that consummate good sense which always pervades every part of his performances. To the most eloquent expression of the eye, to the handwriting of the passions on his features, to a sensibility which tears to pieces the hearts of his auditors, to powers so unparalleled, he adds a judgment of the most exquisite accuracy, the fruit of long experience and close observation, by which he preserves every gradation and transition of the passions, keeping all under the control of a just dependence and natural consistency. So naturally, indeed, do the ideas of the poet seem to mix with his own, that he seemed himself to be engaged in a succession of affecting situations, not giving utterance to a speech, but to the instantaneous expression of his feelings, delivered in the most affecting tones of voice, and with gestures that belong only to nature." A few nights before, she had seen Garrick in a play called *Abel Drugger;* and after she had seen him in *Hamlet* as well, she exclaimed that had she not seen him in both she could not have conceived it possible for one man to perform two such parts with such excellence.

"I found myself," she adds, "not only in the best

place, but in the best company in the house, for I sat next the orchestra, in which were a number of my acquaintances, Edmund and Richard Burke, Dr. Warton, and Sheridan."

In a letter to her old friend Dr. Stonehouse, dated May 1776, she writes: "I have at last had the entire satisfaction to see Garrick in *Hamlet*. I would not wrong him or myself so much as to tell you what I think of it; it is sufficient that you have seen him; I pity those who have not. Posterity will never be able to form the slightest idea of his pretensions. The more I see him, the more I wonder and admire. Whenever he does anything capital, they are so kind as to get me into the pit, which increases the pleasure tenfold. He has acted all his comic characters for the last time. I have seen him within these three weeks take leave of Benedict, Sir John Brute, Kitely, Abel Drugger, Archer, and Leon. It seems to me on these occasions as if I had been assisting at the obsequies of the different poets. I feel almost as much pain as pleasure. He is quite happy in the prospect of his release."

We find from a letter which Hannah wrote at this time to her friend Mrs. Gwatkin, that she had shown her letter on Garrick's *Hamlet* to Mrs. Garrick, and that she had been so pleased with it that she had insisted on taking a copy. To this friend she describes delight at seeing Garrick in *King Lear*. "On Monday night he played *King Lear*, and it is literally true that my spirits have not yet recovered from the shock they sustained. I generally think the last part I see him in the greatest; but, in regard to that night, it was the universal opinion that it was one of the greatest scenes ever exhibited. I called to-day in Leicester Fields, and Sir Joshua declared it was full three days before he got the better of it. The eagerness of people to see him is beyond anything you can have any idea of. You will see half-a-dozen duchesses and countesses of a night in the upper boxes, for the fear of not seeing him at all has humbled those

who used to go, not for the purpose of seeing, but of being seen; and they now courtesy to the ground for the worst places in the house."

In a letter to his mother, in the year 1828, Lord Macaulay says, "I have seen several pictures of Garrick, none resembling another, and I have heard Hannah More speak of the extraordinary variety of countenance by which he was distinguished, and of the unequalled radiance and penetration of his eye." In this, his last season, Hannah had seen Garrick act twenty-seven times, and had spent three months in his house as a guest. She was not alone in her affectionate admiration of his talents and his character. Garrick was idolised by an enormous circle of friends, not only as an actor, but also as a man; he was a universal favourite in the broadest sense of the term.

On her return to Bristol our poetess, her mind and heart still full of the scenes she had left behind her, and of the great event of the season, Garrick's retreat from the stage, she composed her *Ode to Dragon* (Garrick's house-dog at Hampton), in the concluding verses of which she expressed her feelings with regard to his retirement.

The ode begins thus—

"Dragon! since lyrics are the mode,
To thee I dedicate my ode,
And reason good I plead:
Are those who cannot write, to blame
To draw their hopes of future fame,
From those who cannot read?"

In the fifth stanza she asks the dog to change places with her, that she may find herself once more with her dear friends at Hampton—

"O Dragon! change with me thy fate,
To me give up thy place and state,
And I will give thee mine:
I, left to think, and thou to feed!
My mind enlarged, thy body freed,
How blest my lot and thine!"

In the fourteenth stanza she alludes to the prophecy uttered by so many people, that Garrick would soon repent of his retirement and return to the stage—

"Again you'll see him, never fear:
Some half-a-dozen times a year
He still will charm the age;
Accustomed long to be admired,
Of shades and streams he'll soon be tired,
And languish for the stage."

To this she answers—

XVI

"Peace!—To his solitude he bears
The full-blown fame of thirty years;
He bears a nation's praise:
He bears his liberal, polished mind,
His worth, his wit, his sense refined:
He bears his well-earned Bays.

XVII

When warm admirers drop a tear
Because the sun has left his sphere,
And set before his time,
I, who have felt and loved his rays,
What they condemn will loudly praise,
And call the deed sublime.

XVIII

How wise! long pampered with applause,
To make a voluntary pause,
And lay his laurels down!
Boldly repelling each strong claim,
To dare assert to Wealth and Fame,
Enough of both I've known.

XIX

How wise! a short retreat to steal,
The vanity of life to feel,
And from its cares to fly;
To act one calm, domestic scene,
Earth's bustle and the grave between,
Retire, and learn to die."

When writing the last lines of this ode Hannah little dreamed how soon her words would be fulfilled, and that in three short years that calm domestic scene would be over, and Garrick would be no more.[1]

Mrs. Boscawen, to whom Hannah had sent a copy of her *Ode to Dragon*, wrote: "I wish you could have seen with what delight I received your kind and agreeable letter, my dear Madam. It was only a change from talking about you to talking with you; for it came precisely as a gentleman went out of the door, with whom I had held a long dispute upon your subject. That gentleman was Mr. Cambridge, and the dispute was about your charming *Dragon*, which he admired beyond what I can tell you; and says it must absolutely be printed, lest a false copy get out. I did not contend that it must not be printed, but I assured him I would not give him a copy of it. He said he had almost learned it by heart, in only twice hearing it read by Sir Joshua Reynolds, to whom I lent it, under an oath not to take or give a copy of it; which conditions he strictly kept, like a faithful knight; but he too is of Mr. Cambridge's opinion, both in admiring this charming bagatelle, and in desiring that it should be printed."

In the same letter Mrs. Boscawen tells of Mrs. Montagu's safe return from her visit to Paris, a longer journey in those days than now, and adds: "Perhaps you have heard her admirable *bon mot* in answer to Voltaire's calling Shakespeare *un fumier*. She said—'Il en avoit le sort savoir d'enricher des terres ingrates.' 'You know Voltaire is reckoned to have stolen a great deal from Shakespeare, and he certainly is not grateful enough to own it. It is supposed that his anger against poor Mr. le Turneux and the translators is on account of the thefts which will soon be made manifest to all France. Mrs. Montagu was placed within sight and hearing of a

[1] Some of her literary friends questioned the taste of the last stanza in reminding Garrick of his latter end.

Sceance d'Academie, at the Louvre; when M. d'Alembert read something from Voltaire, still very abusive against Shakespeare and his translators."

In her *Essay on Shakespeare,* to which we have already alluded, Mrs. Montagu had got her knife into Voltaire more than once. It was a pity, she had hinted, that he had not used a better English dictionary, and so forth. Indeed one or two of her slashings are worthy of Macaulay. No wonder Voltaire writhed under them, especially as he had borrowed much from our immortal bard, in addition to abusing and misunderstanding him.

During this visit to the French capital Mrs. Montagu had been rather scandalised when, as she was attending divine service in a Roman Catholic church, the preacher had made a pause after the first part of his discourse, and been so loudly and continuously clapped that he could not at once proceed to the second. Mrs. Montagu, who thought, as Burke afterwards put it, that politics and the pulpit were terms which had little agreement, had openly expressed her displeasure at the impropriety of the proceeding, whereupon she had been informed that it was only on St. Louis's Day that this sort of compliment was paid to a sermon, which was then considered rather as a political demonstration. What would the good lady have thought of the Nonconformist Churches of England in the twentieth century, who not only choose political theologians as pastors, but even send them to Parliament! "No sound ought to be heard in the church," wrote Burke, "but the healing voice of Christian charity. The cause of civil liberty and civil government gains as little as that of religion by this confusion of duties."

CHAPTER VI

VISITS TO RELATIONS IN NORFOLK

It was during her three months' residence with the Garricks in the spring of 1776, that Hannah More came into contact for the first time with two women who have always been recognised as two of the most charming personalities that were to be met with in the literary circles of eighteenth-century London. I allude to Mrs. Vesey and Mrs. Delany. "A few nights ago," Hannah writes to Mrs. Gwatkin, "we had an agreeable evening at Mrs. Vesey's; you know she is a favourite of mine, and indeed of everybody that has the pleasure of knowing her." The name of Mrs. Delany occurs for the first time in the last letter Hannah wrote before she left the Garricks' roof to return to Bristol. "Yesterday good and dear Mrs. Boscawen came herself to fetch me to meet at dinner a lady I have long wished to see. This was Mrs. Delany. She was a Granville, and niece to the celebrated poet Lord Lansdowne. She was the friend and intimate of Swift. She tells a thousand pleasant anecdotes relative to the publication of the *Tatler*. As to the *Spectator*, it is almost too modern for her to speak of it. She was in the next room, and heard the cries of alarm when Guiscard stabbed Lord Oxford. In short, she is a living library of knowledge; and time, which has so highly matured her judgment, has taken very little from her graces or her liveliness. She has invited me to visit her; a singular favour from one of her years and character."

Mrs. Delany was then in her seventy-seventh year. Her family, being able to provide for her, had married

her when a young girl, against her inclinations, to a man much older than herself, who, dying conveniently, soon had left her a snug little fortune. John Wesley's biographer was of the opinion that she very nearly became Mrs. John Wesley before she met Mr. Pendarves, and we certainly find in her voluminous correspondence some very affectionate letters which passed between Mary Granville and the founder of Methodism in the days when both were young. In one of her letters to Wesley Mary asked him whether he thought it wrong to go to a concert of music on a Sunday, to which the young man replied, "To judge whether any action be lawful on the Sabbath or no, we are to consider whether it advances the end for which the Sabbath was ordained. What, therefore, tends to advance this end is lawful on this day. What does not tend to advance this end is not lawful on this day."

Dr. Delany, the Dean of Down, the second husband of Mrs. Delany, was also many years her senior and a widower, but the second marriage was one of choice, and turned out very happily. It has been said that Mrs. Delany, though she had many friends among the blue-stockings, never considered herself to be one of them, and that although she afterwards became much attached to Fanny Burney, she refused to know either Mrs. Thrale or Dr. Johnson. This story is not easily believed when we remember how generously Mrs. Delany always stood up for women, and how she valued intellect and intellectual conversation wherever she met with it. It must also be remembered that she was already an elderly woman when Johnson first began to make his mark in the literary world. As for her friendship for Fanny Burney, it certainly had a most unfortunate result, for it led to Fanny's exchanging the labours of her pen for the duties of a lady's maid. The King and Queen happened to call on Mrs. Delany while Fanny was on a visit to her, and coming upon her suddenly and

unexpectedly in the drawing-room, they conversed with her for some time and were so taken with her that the Queen shortly afterwards offered her the post which proved so disastrous to her literary career.

Mrs. Delany was a middle-aged woman when all the world was reading Richardson's *Sir Charles Grandison*. After her own perusal of it she observed that the one blot on Sir Charles's character was that he consented to have his daughters brought up as Roman Catholics. "Had a woman written it," she added, "she would have thought the daughters of as much consequence as the sons; and when I see Mr. Richardson, I shall call him to account for that *faux pas*." Sir Charles Grandison was to that age, what Colonel Newcome was to a later one. One might cull many passages from Mrs. Delany's letters to show how high was her opinion of the position her own sex ought to hold. In one letter she says, speaking of husbands, "Our Maker created us 'help-meets,' which surely implies we are worthy of being their companions, their friends, their advisers, as well as they ours." And in another letter, describing an after-dinner conversation, she wrote: "After dinner the discourse ran upon women being single, and she (Mrs. C—) said it was a foolish scheme, for after forty it was awkward, because they were insignificant, and she spoke with great contempt of them. I was angry at the indignity, and said with great calmness, 'I wonder you should say so, for who makes a better figure than your sister Donnellan, whose drawing-room is constantly filled with the best company, and whose conversation is much sought after?' 'Oh, but,' she added, 'they grow jealous and suspicious. 'Not at all,' said I, "unless they were inclined to it when young.'" So even in those days there were women who were stupid enough not to see that by running down their own sex they were running themselves down as well. Of such was not Mrs. Delany.

Six years before Hannah More was introduced to her Mrs. Delany emphatically denounced, in a letter to a friend, the terrible evil of the card-playing of that day. "Ladies lose vast sums," she wrote. "It answers their purpose by killing that which will kill them (time), little thinking of that bar where they must inevitably appear, and be arraigned for that murder. It mortifies my sex's pride to see women exposed to the contempt of men, over whom, I think, from nature and education, if they were just to their own dignity, they have so many advantages."

Mrs. Vesey, Mrs. Delany, and Mrs. Boscawen were ideal hostesses. In a letter from which we have already quoted Hannah wrote: "Last night I was again at Mrs. Boscawen's, where there was a very splendid assembly; there were about forty people, most of them of the first quality. . . . The Duchess of Beaufort, Lady Scarsdale, her sister, Lord and Lady Radnor, Lady Ranelagh, Lady Onslow, the Bishop of Bath and Wells, Lord and Lady Clifford, Captain and Mrs. Middleton, and Mrs. Bouverie. Though the party was so large, the evening was far from being disagreeable, for, as there were only two card-tables, one could always make a little party for conversation. Our hostess was all herself, easy, well-bred, and in every place at once; and so attentive to every individual that I dare say everybody, when they got home, thought as I did, that they alone had been the immediate object of her attention."

Charlotte Yonge, in her charming little sketch of Hannah More, writes of the period we have now reached as follows: "Since Hannah More had become famous, her father's Norfolk relations recollected her existence, and she was invited to pay a visit to a family named Cotton." And in April 1777 Hannah described a visit to these relations in her letters to her sisters. "We arrived at Bungay," she writes, "a little before nine. On my way thither, Thorpe Hall, where my father was born, was

pointed out to me. Our Cousin Cotton's house is about a quarter of a mile out of the town; it is large, elegant, and very handsomely furnished. Bungay is a much better town than I had expected, very clean and pleasant. I am very glad, however, that the house is a little way out of it. On Tuesday we went to dine at Mr. John Cotton's, a romantic farm-house, buried in the obscurity of a deep wood. A great number of Cottons were assembled, of all ages, sexes, and characters. The old lady of the house told me that my father lay at her brother's house the last night he spent in this country. She took a good deal of pains to explain to me genealogies, alliances, and intermarriages, not one word of which can I remember." (Yet Hannah had a remarkably clear memory!) "The table and the guests groaned with the hospitality of the entertainers, and we had wines that would not have disgraced the table of a Bristol alderman. . . . I am very well. I eat brown bread and custards like a native; and we have a pretty, agreeable, laudable custom of getting tipsy twice a day upon Herefordshire cider. The other night we had a great deal of company —eleven damsels, to say nothing of men. I protest I hardly do them justice, when I pronounce that they had among them, on their heads, an acre and a half of shrubbery, besides slopes, grass-plots, tulip-beds, clumps of peonies, kitchen-gardens, and greenhouses. . . . Mrs. Cotton and I had an infinite deal of entertainment out of them, though, to our shame be it spoken, some of them were cousins; but I have no doubt that they held in great contempt our roseless heads and leafless necks."

So much for Hannah More's opinion of the hats worn by English ladies in the summer of 1777! Mr. Roberts adds a note to this letter to inform his readers that Garrick had put an end to some of the absurd fashions, by appearing in the character of Sir John Brute, dressed in female attire, his cap decorated with a profusion of

every sort of vegetable—an immensely large carrot hanging over each ear.

The Cottons took Hannah for a driving tour through Norfolk, and in another letter she describes, among others, a visit to the country seat of Sir Andrew Fountain. "The housekeeper, with an urbanity rarely to be found among the dependents of the great, very obligingly entertained us with cakes and wine."

They also visited Castle Acre—"a very fine piece of ruins, which it would cost an honest citizen who loves bow-windows, highway prospects, Chinese railing, chapel-looking stables (Gothic ?), and steeples upon malt-houses a thousand a year to keep in repair. It is not so large as Kenilworth, nor so large as Tintern; but it has a considerable share of magnificence, and no small portion of beauty. It is so old that tradition itself does not pretend to say when it was built; but conjecture says, in her usual random language, that it has been destroyed a thousand years."

They also paid a visit to Houghton Hall, the seat of Sir Robert Walpole, and she writes: "As we rode up to it, I could not but look with veneration, in spite of all the littleness of party and the feuds of faction, on this edifice, built by the man who gave to Europe, for twenty years, the blessing of uninterrupted peace. . . . The pictures form by far the finest private collection in this kingdom; they are valued at more than two hundred thousand pounds. Claudes, Titians, and Salvators, are to be seen in the most delightful confusion; and most of these pieces are in the very best manner of their respective masters. . . . The mind is almost bewildered by the number and beauty of these exquisite works. . . . There is at Houghton so exquisite a dining-room with marble recesses, columns, and cisterns, and so luxurious, so cool, so charming, that I fancied myself at the villa of Pliny, or of Lucullus; and though I cannot bear oysters, yet I could have eaten some conchylia of the

lake we saw out of the window; and I drank, in idea, a glass of Falernian, of twenty consulships, cooled by the elemental nymph."

Of Holkham Hall, built by Lord Leicester, and at that time seat of Mr. Coke, she writes, after praising its statues, its antiques, and its draperies: "In the article of sculpture, however, it yields to Wilton as much as it exceeds most other places. There is a hall of pink-veined marble, of immense size, superior to anything of the kind in the nation; round it is a colonnade of pink and white marble fluted."

The next letter gives us an interesting peep into her own life and surroundings at this time. "We are just returned from spending a few days with Mrs. Cotton's father and mother: they live very genteelly, have a noble garden, a handsome coach. Their other daughter was married to a man of very good fashion, and their niece to Lord Hume. She was down on a visit at Ormsby. Her Lord, in return for the large fortune she brought him, makes her a very fashionable, negligent husband. I saw her on Sunday, poor thing! She sighs, and is no countess at her heart. . . . I have had a letter from Mrs. Barbauld, so full of elegance and good nature, with an invitation so frank, and earnest, that I cannot leave the country without going to see her. I like my Brokish cousins very well; she is a chatty, sensible woman, and he as deep in divinity as ever. I scarcely ever met with any person that had spent so much time, with so little detriment to his taste and manners, in controversial reading. It has left him very moderate and very charitable. I am quite a nobody in debate here, though I made such a figure lately in explaining Arianism, Socinianism, and all the isms, to Mr. Garrick. They rise here at five, and go to bed at nine; quite the thing for me, you know; for my morning headaches, alas! preclude early rising: and while they have been asleep at night, I have gone through Dr. Maclaine's answer to Soame

Jenyns. There is a good deal of wit and learning and, I believe, truth and solidity, in some of his objections; others I think false and trivial, and his manner of stating them unfair. I do love Jenyns, but I do not contend for every part of his book: he is but a sucking-child in Christianity, and I am afraid, has represented religion as a very uncomfortable thing. The deists will triumph at Maclaine's book, and say, 'See how these Christians disagree!' Our cousins are very much concerned, and so am I, that their son is so fond of Bolingbroke and Hume. He is much too fashionable in his principles, though I believe very correct in his conduct. We frequently give each other, in our indirect warfare, broad hints about infidelity and Methodism."

This is the first time the word Methodism occurs in the correspondence. Hannah's young relative had evidently been taunting her playfully with being a Methodist, in return for her wise admonitions on the question of reading atheistic books.

On leaving her Norfolk cousins Hannah paid her friend Mrs. Barbauld a little visit. The religious views of those two young poetesses were so much at variance that we can hardly suppose they would choose religion as a topic of conversation. There could be little in common between the strong Unitarianism of the one and the almost Methodistical Anglicanism of the other. Had Hannah's religious convictions been as narrow as they were sincere, she would never have paid this visit. "I went to Mrs. Barbauld's on Thursday," she writes, "intending only to spend one day; but the Muses are such fascinating witches, that there is no getting away from them. We had an agreeable addition to our party, a Mr. Forster, who had sailed round the world, and has published his voyages in two volumes quarto. So that for a little remote village in Suffolk we do not make up a bad society. Mrs. Barbauld and I have found out that we feel as little envy and malice towards

each other as though we had neither of us attempted to 'build the lofty rhyme'; though she says this is what the envious and malicious can never be brought to believe."

Although we have heard little about the work in which Hannah was at this time engaged, we know that she had been busy giving all her energies to the production of a tragedy. Even while visiting her relatives at Bungay she was corresponding with Garrick about it. She had asked the great actor to write an epilogue to *Percy*, and among her correspondence we find an undated letter which she received from him in reply.

"My dear Madam,—Write you an epilogue! give you a pinch of snuff! By the greatest good luck in the world, I received your letter when I was surrounded with ladies and gentlemen, setting out upon a party to go up the river Thames. Our expedition will take us seven or eight days upon the most limited calculation. They would hardly allow me a moment to write this scrawl: I snatched up the first piece of paper (and a bad one it is), to tell you how unhappy I am that I cannot confer upon you so small a favour directly. If you will let me know immediately, by a line directed to me at the Adelphi, for whom you intend the epilogue, and what are his or her strong marks of character in the play (for my copy is in town, or with Miss Young), I will do my best on my return. I must desire you not to rely upon me this time, on account of my present situation; I could as soon sleep in a whirlwind as write among these ladies, and I shall be so fatigued with talking myself, and hearing them talk, or I could sit up all night to obey your commands. Prepare one, I beseech you, for fear I should not have a day for composing an epilogue. Let me know what subject you choose, what character is to speak it, and when it is to be acted, and if not now, I will most certainly scribble something for the next time.

Should I be drowned, I hope you will excuse me, and write my epitaph.

"With my best and warmest wishes to you, your sisters, and the whole blood of the Stonehouses,—I am, Your Friend and Humble Servant, D. GARRICK."

Garrick also wrote the prologue to *Percy*. It was to be spoken by Mrs. Bulkeley, and ran as follows:—

"Though I'm a female, and the rule is ever
For us, in Epilogue to beg your favour,
Yet now I take the lead—and leaving art
And envy to the men—with a warm heart,
A woman here I come—to take a woman's part.
No little jealousies my mind perplex,
I come the friend and champion of my sex:
I'll prove, ye fair, that, let us have our swing,
We can, as well as man, do anything
Nay, better too, perhaps—for now and then
These times produce some bungling among men.
In spite of lordly wits—with force and ease,
Can't we write plays, or crush 'em if we please?
The men, who grant not much, allow us charms—
Are eyes, shapes, dimples, then, our only arms?
To rule this man our sex Dame Nature teaches;
Mount the high horse we can, and make long speeches.
Did not a Lady Knight, late Chevalier,
A brave, smart soldier to your eyes appear?
Hey! presto! pass! his sword becomes a fan,
A comely woman rising from the man.
The French their Amazonian maid invite—
She goes—alike well skilled to talk or write,
Dance, ride, negotiate, scold, coquet, or fight.
If she should set her heart upon a rover,
And he prove false, she'll kick her faithless lover.
The Greeks and Romans own our boundless claim—
The Muses, Graces, Virtues, Fortune, Fame,
Wisdom, and Nature they women call;
With this sweet flattery—yet they mix some gall—
'Twill out—the Furies too are females all.
The powers of Riches, Physic, War, and Wine,
Sleep, Death, and Devils too—are masculine.
Are we unfit to rule?—a poor suggestion!
Austria and Russia answer well that question.

If joy from sense and matchless grace arise,
With your own treasure, Britons, bless your eyes.
If such there are—sure, in a humbler way,
The sex, without much guilt, may write a play :
That they've done nobler things, there's no denial :
With all your judgment, then, prepare for trial—
Summon your critic powers, your manhood summon—
A brave man will protect, not hurt, a woman :
Let us wish modestly to share with men,
If not the force, the feather of the pen."

The "Lady Knight" alluded to by Garrick in the above epilogue was no other than the famous Chevalière D'Eon. In a note to one of Horace Walpole's letters Croker gives a short account of this singular person, who was first known in England as the Secretary to the Duke de Nivernois' embassy, and who acted as Chargé d'Affaires during the interval between the ambassador's departure and the arrival of M. de Guerchy. This honour appears to have turned his head, for he became absurdly exasperated at being superseded by M. de Guerchy, set his authority at defiance, and published a volume of libels, whereupon the courts were ordered to notify in the *London Gazette* that his mission was at an end ; he was proceeded against by criminal information, and finally convicted of the libels. He was not heard of again till the year 1777, when, a few months before Garrick wrote his epilogue for *Percy*, the public was astonished by the trial of an action before Lord Mansfield for money lost on a wager respecting his sex. On that trial it seemed proved beyond all question that D'Eon was a female. Proceedings in the Parliament of Paris had a similar result, and the soldier and minister was condemned to wear woman's attire, which D'Eon did for many years. He emigrated at the Revolution, and died in London in May 1810, at the age of eighty. On examination after death the body proved to be that of a man. French biographers doubted whether the Chevalier D'Eon and the person who died in 1810 under the name

of Chevalière D'Eon were the same person, but the English surgeon who examined the body in 1810 stated that this person had certainly lived for the last ten years of his life in the character of a woman and under the name of D'Eon.

Ten years after the first production of *Percy*, with Garrick's epilogue alluding to "A comely woman rising from the man," Hannah More wrote to her sisters from London: "On Friday I gratified a curiosity of many years, by meeting at dinner Madame la Chevalière D'Eon; she is extremely entertaining, has universal information, wit, vivacity, and gaiety. Something too much of the latter (I have heard), when she has taken a bottle or two of Burgundy; but this being a very sober party, she was kept entirely within the limits of decorum. General Johnson was of the party, and it was ridiculous to hear her military conversation. Sometimes it was *Quand j'etois Colonel d'un tel regiment;* then again, *Non, c'étois quand j'étois secrétaire d'Ambassade du Duc de Nivernois;* or, *Quand je négociéis la paix de Paris.* She is, to be sure, a phenomenon in history, and as such, a great curiosity. But one D'Eon is enough, and one slice of her quite sufficient."

It was in the same year, 1789, that Horace Walpole, in a letter to the Countess of Ossory, related how Mrs. Conway had invited him to meet at her house an old acquaintance, whom he had failed to recognise when he met her there the week before, namely, Mademoiselle la Chevalière D'Eon—"Who, as Mrs. Conway told me, had taken it ill that I had not reconoitred her, and said she must be strangely altered—the devil is in it, if she is not—but, alack, I have found her altered again; adieu to the abbatical dignity that I thought I had discovered; I now found her loud, noisy, and vulgar; in fact, I believe that she had dined a little *en dragon*. The night was hot, and she had no muff or gloves, and her hands and arms seem not to have participated in the change of sexes, but

are fitter to carry a chair than a fan (evidently an allusion to the epilogue). I am comforted too about her accent. I asked M. Barthélémy, the French Secretary, who was present, whether it was Parisian, and good French; he assured me so far from it that the first time he met her he had been surprised at its being so bad, and that her accent is strong Burgundian;" and he adds that "as Mademoiselle Common of Two's reserve is a little subsided, there were other persons present, three foreign ministers besides Barthélémy, Lord Carmarthen, Count Orinski, Wilkes and his daughter, and the Chief of the Moravians. I could not help thinking how posterity would wish to have been in my situation, at once with three such historic personages as D'Eon, Wilkes, and Oginski, who had so great a share in the revolution of Poland, and was king of it for four-and-twenty hours."

In a letter to the Misses Berry, dated September 4, 1787, Horace Walpole told them that he had come across two lines in Spenser which reminded him of the Chevalière D'Eon—

> "Now when Marfisa has put off her beaver,
> To be a woman every one perceive her."

And he remarked—"I do not think that is so perceptible in the Chevalière. She looked more feminine, as I remember her, in regimentals than she does now. She is at best a hen-dragoon, or an Herculean hostess. I wonder she does not make a campaign in her own country, and offer her sword to the almost-dethroned monarch, as a second Joan of Arc."

To readers of the twentieth century, who know that D'Eon was, after all, nothing more nor less than an effeminate-looking man, who for some private reason preferred to end his days in the character of a woman, it is not surprising if both Hannah More and Horace Walpole found her somewhat masculine in appearance and manners.

In a letter to David Garrick, dated June 16, 1777, Hannah More writes from the home of her cousins at Bungay: "We have in this place the tragedians of the city of Norwich, who sojourn here a month once in two years, in their progress through the two counties. The dramatic fury rages terribly among the people—the more so, I suppose, from being allowed to vent itself so seldom. Everybody goes to the play every night—that is, every other night, which is as often as they perform. Visiting, drinking, and even card-playing, is for the happy month suspended; nay, I question if, like Lent, it does not stop the celebration of weddings, for I do not believe there is a damsel in the town who would spare the time to be married during this rarely occurring scene of festivity. . . . I find I have been sadly mauled in some of the daily papers. I cannot get to see them. I did not think I was of consequence enough: they tell me it is Kenrick. I hear Barretti has been civil enough to send me one of his books on Shakespeare, but I have it not here; it is a strange undertaking; slippery ground, I think; an Italian author to write about our divine English dramatist, and that in the French language. . . . Many thanks, dear sir, for your good and wholesome advice about my play. I do nothing, except regret my own idleness. I tremble for my fifth act; but I am afraid I shall never make others tremble at it. . . ."

Hannah More passed through London again on her return journey to Bristol from Norfolk, and again enjoyed the hospitality of her friends the Garricks. "As soon as I got to London," she writes, "I drove straight to the Adelphi, where to my astonishment I found a coach waiting for me to carry me to Hampton. Upon my arrival here I was immediately put in possession of my old chamber. Garrick is all good-humour, vivacity, and wit. While I think of it, I must treat you to a little distich which Mrs. Barbauld wrote extempore, on my showing my Felix Buckles (the elegant buckles which

Garrick wore the last time he ever acted, and with which he presented me as a relic)—

> "'Thy buckles, O Garrick, thy friend may now use,
> But no mortal hereafter shall tread in thy shoes.'

"Last Wednesday we went to town for a night, when Dr. Burney sat an hour or two with us. We have had a great deal of company here, lords, ladies, wits, critics, poets. Last Saturday we had a very agreeable day. Our party consisted of about twelve; for these dear people understand society too well ever to have very large parties. The Norfolk Wyndham, Sheridan, and Lord Palmerston said the most lively things. But Roscius (Garrick) surpassed himself, and literally kept the table in a roar for hours. . . . After supper, on Sunday, Garrick read to us, out of *Paradise Lost*, that fine part on diseases and old age. . . . We go on Friday into Hampshire, to Mr. Wilmot's. Lord and Lady Bathurst are to be of the party. I should be apt to expect that the presence of a lord-chancellor was not very likely to contribute to mirth; but I don't think all the great officers of state put together could have gravity enough to damp the fire of Garrick, or blunt the edge of his wit."

Dr. Burney and the Garricks had been friends for years, and many a romp had the Burney children enjoyed with their beloved Mr. Garrick. At this date Fanny Burney had not yet blossomed into an authoress, and it was not till the following year that she published her *Evelina*. One cannot but be struck, in studying the lives of our eighteenth-century writers, with the fact that they all emerged more or less from one and the same little group of intellectually disposed families, or, if they did not emerge from them, they were drawn into their circle. London, so much smaller then than now, had its literary centre, its intellectual soil, and its intellectual atmosphere, just as some continental cities

have to-day a musical soil and a musical atmosphere. No wonder that some good plants were produced!

While visiting at the country seat of Mr. Wilmot, Farnborough Place, Hannah wrote to her sisters: "You will judge of the size of the house when I tell you there are eleven visitors, and all perfectly well accommodated. The Wilmots live in the greatest magnificence; but what is a much better thing, they live also rationally and sensibly. On Sunday evening, however, I was a little alarmed; they were preparing for music (sacred music was the ostensible thing), but before I had time to feel uneasy, Garrick turned round and said, 'Nine, you are a Sunday woman; retire to your room—I will recall you when the music is over.' The great seal disappointed us, but we have Lady Bathurst, Lady Catherine Apsley, Dr. Kennicott, the Hebrew Professor of Oxford, his wife, a very agreeable woman (though she copies Hebrew), besides the Garricks and two or three other very clever people. We live with the utmost freedom and ease imaginable, walking all together or in small parties, chatting, reading, or scribbling, just as we like."

With every individual of this house-party Hannah formed a warm and lasting friendship. With Dr. and Mrs. Kennicott in particular, she soon became very intimate. Dr. Kennicott's life-work, independently of his professional duties, was his careful and critical collation of the Old Testament Scriptures in their original language. Mrs. Kennicott had herself learned Hebrew, in order to qualify herself for the task of correcting her husband's proofs.

From this period we find Garrick addressing Hannah as "The Nine," a name he had given her because, he said, she embodied in herself every one of the nine Muses. Hannah appears to have submitted each act of *Percy* to the Garricks as soon as it was written. The doctor had ordered Garrick a treatment of the Bath waters, and just before going thither he wrote to Hannah—"Though

my doctors have extorted a vow from me, that I shall neither dine nor give dinners while I stay at Bath; yet I have a mental reservation with regard to Bristol. However, if I continue sick and peevish, I had better keep my ill-humours at home, and for my wife alone. She is bound to them, and so reconciled to them by long use, that she can go to sleep in the midst of a good scolding, as a good sailor can while the guns are firing. Mrs. Garrick is studying your two acts. We shall bring them with us, and she will criticise you to the bone. A German commentator (Montaigne says) will suck an author dry. She is resolved to dry you up to a slender shape, and has all her wits at work upon you."

Hannah More was in constant correspondence with the Garricks during the early months of the year 1777, the year in which she was to prove so successful as a playwright. We will introduce here one of the characteristic epistles she received from the great actor.

"Broadlands, 1777.

"My dear Nine,—I have been half dead and thought I should never have seen you more. I took care of your property (her play), and have shown my love to you by a trifling legacy—but that is at present deferred; and if our friendship is like that of some other persons, we may, in a little time, smile, and shake hands, and backbite each other as genteelly as the best of them.

"I am at the sweet seat of Lord Palmerston, called *Broadlands*, near Romsey, in Hampshire, and again growing fat, and overflowing with spirits. I was really so ill that I could not write a letter but with pain. I am not suffered to write or read; therefore I am now pleasing myself by stealth.

"Your friend the Dean of Gloucester (Tucker) has most kindly sent me his book against Locke and his followers. I have read it with care and like it, some few trifling matters excepted, but I cannot be conceited

enough to make my objections in the margin of his book. What shall I do? You are, I suppose, in the same predicament.

"If you will read the last *Monthly Review*, you will see an article upon the *Wreath of Fashion*, which has been much approved; and, what is more surprising, has revived the sale of the poem very briskly. A word in your ear—but be secret for your life—I wrote it."

In another letter written soon after the above, Garrick says—"I hope you will consider your dramatic matter with all your wit and feeling. Let your fifth act be worthy of you, and tear the heart to pieces, or woe betide you. I shall not pass over any scenes, or parts of scenes, that are merely written to make up a certain number of lines. Such doings, Madam Nine, will neither do for you nor me.—Most affectionately Yours, Upon the Gallon. D. GARRICK."

The married life of the Garricks was, as we have seen, an exceptionally happy one, yet reports to the contrary were invented and circulated, as the following letter from Garrick tells us:—

"ESSEX, *July* 9, 1777.

"MY DEAREST OF HANNAHS,—You must have thought me lost, mad, or dead, that I have not sent you a morsel of affection for some time. I have an excuse, if there can be any for the neglect of such a friend! We are now with Mr. Rigby (the Right Hon. Richard Rigby), and some ladies, our particular friends, by the seaside; and while I am writing this in my dressing-room, I see no less than fifty vessels under sail, and one, half-an-hour ago, saluted us with thirteen guns. Among all news, foreign and domestic, that travels through and about Bristol, have you not heard that *Mrs. Garrick and I were separated?* Tell the truth, dear Nine, and shame, you know whom. To our very great surprise a great friend of ours came

from London; and to his greater surprise, found us laughing over our tea under our walnut-tree; he took me aside and told me it was all over the town, from Hyde Park Corner to Whitechapel dunghill, that I had parted with Mrs. Garrick. You may easily suppose this was great matter of mirth to us. We imagined somebody had had a mind to joke with our friend, but upon inquiry we found that such a report had been spread; but to comfort your heart, be assured that we are as much united as ever, and are both well—that there is a prospect of dragging on our clogs for some years to come. Colman is preparing his comedy of four acts, called *Suicide*, a very dangerous subject, but the actors say it must have great success.

"My theatrical curiosity decreases daily, and my vanity as an author is quite extinct; I have written a copy of verses to Mr. Baldwin, the member for Shropshire, upon his attack upon me in the House of Commons.[1] He complained that a celebrated gentleman was admitted into the House when everybody else was excluded, and *that I gloried in my situation*. Upon these last words my muse has taken flight, and with success. I have described the different speakers, and it is said, well, and strongly, and true. I read them to Lord North, Lord Gower, Lord Weymouth, Mr. Rigby, . . . and they were all pleased. If I have time before I have to send away this long letter, you shall have the first copy, though you must take care not to suffer them to go from your own hands. I have, upon my word, given them to nobody. Burke and Mr. Townsend behaved nobly upon the occasion. The whole House groaned at poor Baldwin, who is reckoned, *par excellence*, the dullest man in it; and a question was nearly going to be put, to give me an exclusive privilege to go in whenever I pleased. In short,

[1] Garrick, happening to be in the gallery of the House of Commons, was allowed to retain his seat, when the gallery was ordered to be cleared shortly before the close of the session.

I am a much greater man than I thought. Whenever I receive your story, I shall con it over most unmercifully. My wife this moment tells me that I must send you a double portion of her love: and she has added that, if the vinegar is but half as sharp as your pen, or as your temper is sweet, she shall be most thankful for it. There is German wit for you! [An allusion to his wife's nationality.] I shall deliver the overflowings of your heart to her in all the purity of affection. We are going to Lady Spencer's for ten days in half-an-hour. Our loves to all about you.—Most affectionately and faithfully yours, D. GARRICK."

The next letter was received a few weeks before Hannah came up to town to witness the first performance of her new tragedy.

"ADELPHI, *Oct.* 17, 1777.

"Shame! Shame! Shame!—You may well say so, my dear madam: but indeed I have been so disagreeably entertained with the gout running all about me, from head to heel, that I have been unfit for all the duties of friendship: and very often for those which a good husband and a good friend should never fail performing. I must gallop over this small piece of paper—it was the first I snatched up—to tell you that my dear wife has your letter, and thinks it a fine one and a sweet one.

"I was at court to-day, and such work they made with me, from the Archbishop of Canterbury to the Page of the Back Stairs, that I have been suffocated with compliments. We have wanted you at some of our private hours. Where's the Nine? we want the Nine! Silent was every muse.

"Cambridge said yesterday, in a large company at the Bishop of Durham's, where I dined, that your ode to my house-dog was a very witty production; and he

thought there was nothing to be altered or amended except in the last stanza, which he thought the only weak one. I am afraid that you asked me to do something for you about the Parliament, which, in my multitude of matters, was overlooked; pray, if it is of consequence, let me know it again, and you may be assured of the intelligence you want.

"The last new tragedy, *Semiramis*, though a bare translation, met with great success. The prologue is a bad one, as you may read in the papers, by the author: the epilogue is grave, but a sweet, pretty, elegant morsel, by Mr. Sheridan: it had deservedly great success. Mr. Mason's *Caractacus* is not crowded, but the men of taste, and classical men, admire it much. Mrs. Garrick sends a large parcel of love to you all. I send mine in the same bundle. Pray write soon, and forgive me all my delinquencies. I really have not time to read over my scrawl, so pray decipher it and excuse me.—Ever yours most affectionately, D. GARRICK."

CHAPTER VII

"PERCY"

It has been said that no poet could produce a genuine play by solitary incubation, unless, indeed, the incubation has been preceded by active personal contact with the stage, and careful study of its capabilities.[1] The author of a play must be content to learn much from those who are his intellectual inferiors, for a play is a collective production, and co-operation is a primary condition of its success. "From Shakespeare to Sheridan no successful dramatist has disregarded the importance of these conditions." In writing a drama two heads are often better than one, as the mere verbal discussion of a thing frequently suggests possibilities and developments.

Before Hannah More brought out her tragedy she had spent three months under the roof of, and in daily converse with, the greatest actor of the century; she had seen him act on twenty-seven different nights in one season. A room in Garrick's house had been set apart for her to do her writing in, and all the evidence available points to the fact that *Percy* was partially written under his supervision, as well as under his roof.

Percy was written, in the words of Miss Yonge, under the supervision of one who perfectly gauged the contemporary public, and who though retired, still retained unlimited powers of patronage. According to Horace Walpole's friend Kitty Clive, Garrick's nursing had enabled the bantling to go alone in a month.

So far, so good, but Hannah More's play was, after all, only one of a very large number that had had the privilege of being nursed by Garrick. Murphy's life of the

[1] See "The Stage in Relation to Literature." *The Fortnightly*, 1883.

great actor is full of the names of literary aspirants whose plays Garrick supervised, wrote prologues for, and patronised to the utmost of his powers, yet none of these achieved such immediate, such triumphant success as *Percy*. Goldsmith had only been dead three years; Sheridan was just at the height of his popularity, and yet there was room for another successful dramatist, and that a young woman.

Hannah More came up to London in November 1777. Mr. Harris of Covent Garden had already accepted her tragedy, and it was to be brought out at once. She writes to her sisters: "I believe I shall go to Hampton to-morrow to stay two or three days. They insist upon it, and I think it will be of service to me, if it be only to keep me quiet for a few days. Mrs. Garrick says I shall have my own comfortable room, with a good fire, and 'with all the lozenges and all the wheys in the world.' You may be sure this was her own expression. Mr. Garrick was at the Chancellor's this morning. It is impossible to show more friendly anxiety than both he and Lady Bathurst do for the success of *Percy*. The play seldom comes into my head unless it is mentioned. I am at present very tranquil about it. The town is rather empty, but who's afraid?"

And again she writes: "It is impossible to tell you of all the kindness and friendship of the Garricks; he thinks of nothing, talks of nothing, writes of nothing, but *Percy*. He is too sanguine; it will have a fall, and so I tell him. When Garrick had finished his prologue and epilogue (which are excellent), he desired I would pay him. Dryden, he said, used to have five guineas apiece, but as he was a richer man he would be content if I would treat him with a handsome supper and a bottle of claret. We haggled sadly about the price, I insisting that I could only afford to give him a beef-steak and a pot of porter; and at about twelve, we sat down to some toast and honey, with which the temperate bard con-

tented himself. Several very great ones made interest to make Garrick read the play, which he peremptorily refused. I supped on Wednesday night at Sir Joshua's: spent yesterday morning at the Chancellor's, and the evening at Mrs. Boscawen's, Lady Bathurst being of the party.

"What dreadful news from America! We are a disgraced, undone nation. What a sad time to bring out a play in! when, if the country had the least spark of virtue remaining, not a creature would think of going to it. But the levity of the times will on this occasion be of some service to me."

The war with the American colonies had already been going on for two years when Hannah wrote thus, and none had pleaded more eloquently for peace than her friend Edmund Burke. It was in this very year (1777) that he addressed his impassioned letter to his constituents at Bristol on the gross injustice of England's conduct towards the colonists, in trying to enforce taxation without representation, and the cruelty of employing German mercenaries to subdue her own kindred. He spoke bitterly of those "who prefer the interests of some paltry faction to the very being of their country." This was the year of the birth of the American nation. America's national flag "Old Glory" had been designed a few months before and worked by Betsy Ross, in Philadelphia. Burke was one of those who recognised the fact that the American colonists had grown into a distinct people, and that they must be treated as such. "Nothing," said he, "which is in progression can rest upon its original plan." It was Burke who moved for the repeal of all the coercive statutes. He was willing "to part with a limb to save the body . . . Anything rather than a fruitless, hopeless, unnatural civil war." [1]

At length the eventful night arrived, and *Percy* was

[1] See Burke's *Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol*. 1777.

produced at Covent Garden on 10th December. Its wonderful success surpassed all Hannah's wildest expectations. At 10 P.M., when all was over, she wrote a few hurried lines to her sisters from Garrick's study: "He himself puts the pen into my hand, and bids me say that all is just as it should be. Nothing was ever more warmly received. I went with Mr. and Mrs. Garrick; sat in Mr. Harris's box, in a snug dark corner, and behaved very well—that is, very quietly. The prologue and epilogue were received with bursts of applause; so indeed was the whole; as much beyond my expectations as my deserts! Mr. Garrick's kindness has been unceasing."

It is a well-known truth that success must always incur the hostility of envy. A report soon spread that Hannah Cowley, the actress, who had herself written an unsuccessful play, had fainted in her box after crying out at one of the finest parts of *Percy*, "That's mine! That's mine!" When this charge of plagiarism reached the ears of Hannah More she declared that she had never set eyes on the manuscript from which she was accused of stealing. On its being revealed to her that poverty and disappointment had goaded the actress to bring this false charge against her, Hannah immediately set about trying to help, secretly, the woman who had so wronged her. After his death, a letter from Hannah More was found among Cadell's papers, in which she had begged him to see Hannah Cowley's play and examine it to find out whether he could not help to bring it forward.

The day after the first performance of *Percy*, Mrs. Montagu wrote to Hannah: "No one can more sincerely rejoice in the triumph of last night than myself, unless some friend, equally affectionate, was of a disposition so timid as to doubt of your success, which I never did for one moment. I thought the divine muses would be more than a match for the infernal powers; and though Cerberus showed a disposition to bark, and the Hydra to

hiss, the one would only prove himself an ill-natured cur, the other a silly goose—their clamours were all drowned in the universal plaudit."

After the second performance of *Percy*, Hannah wrote to her sisters: "I may venture to tell you (as you extorted a promise from me to conceal nothing) what I would not hazard last night—that the reception of *Percy* exceeds my most sanguine wishes. I am just returned from the second night, and it was, if possible, received more favourably than on the first. One tear is worth a thousand hands. and I had the satisfaction to see even the men shed them in abundance. The critics (as is usual) met at the Bedford last night, to fix the character of the play. If I were a heroine of romance, and was writing to my confidante, I should tell you all the fine things that were said, but as I am a real living Christian woman, I do not think it would be so modest ; I will only say, as Garrick does, that I have had so much flattery, that I might, if I would, choke myself in my own pap."

Percy was produced at a moment "of mingled elation and humiliation. The news of the surrender of General Burgoyne on convention at Saratoga had arrived almost at the same time as the tidings of Howe's capture of Philadelphia, in spite of all Washington's patient strategy in its defence." Leslie tells us that Sir Joshua was present on the fourth night of the Bristol Muse's tragedy, and that it was a great success, "even when Mason's *Caractacus*, produced a year before, with the aid of Mrs. Hartley's beauty in Evelina, did not fill the house . . . and Home's *Alfred*, brought out little more than a month after *Percy*, only survived three nights." [1] Another dramatic writer whose efforts only met with failure was Cowper's friend Hayley. As a dramatist Hayley was unsuccessful, though it had been his first ambition to excel in that line. Southey tells us that one luckless tragedy of Hayley's which he had published without the hope of its being

[1] Leslie, *Life of Joshua Reynolds*.

acted, had the singular fortune of being represented at both the London theatres simultaneously; it was condemned by the one, and received with applause by the other. We can hardly believe, in our day, that so recently as the last half of the eighteenth century London was possessed of only two theatres!

Hannah's next letter tells that the House of Northumberland received the play as a personal compliment to themselves. "Yesterday morning Dr. Percy was announced to me. When he came in he told me he was sent by the Duke of Northumberland and Earl Percy to congratulate me on my great success; and to inform me of the general approbation and to thank me in their names for the honour I had done them. That the Duke and my lord were under much concern as not being able to attend the play; both father and son having the gout. They sent, however, each for a ticket, for which they paid as became the blood of the Percys; and in so genteel and respectful a manner, that it was impossible for the nicest pride to take umbrage at it. I am more flattered with the honour this noble family have done me, because I did not solicit their attention, nor would I even renew my acquaintance with Dr. Percy, on coming to town, lest it should look like courting the notice of his patrons. *Je suis un peu fière.*"

This Dr. Percy was then Bishop of Dromore. He is known in our day as the preserver of many of our fine old English ballads, which, but for his careful researches, might have been lost forever, and which, in the volume into which he collected them, we call "Percy's Reliques."

In her next letter Hannah says: "They are playing *Percy* at this moment for the seventh time: I never think of going. It is very odd, but it does not amuse me. I had a very brilliant house last night. It is strange, but I hear Lord Lyttelton has been every night since the play came out. I do not deserve it, for I always abuse him. I have the great good fortune to have the whole

town warm in my favour, and the writers too, except —— and ——; these two are very ill of the yellow jaundice—weak men to be disturbed at so feeble an enemy! Rival I am not to either of them, or to anybody else: for the idea of competition never entered my head. But these two, looking upon themselves as the greatest tragic writers of the age, consider me as the usurper of their rights. Hoole and Mason are much more generous: the reason, I suppose, is they are better poets. The Duke of Northumberland has sent to thank me for a copy of my play. My lord bid Dr. Percy tell me it was impossible to express how exactly I had pleased him in the manner of wording the inscription."

The Lord Lyttelton who took such an interest in *Percy* was the son of the first Lord Lyttelton, author of the *Dialogues of the Dead*, but, unfortunately, a very different class of man from his father. His subsequent history only too well justifies Hannah More's disapproval of this young man, who turned out a profligate of the blackest type. One of the two dramatists who were so tormented with envy at Hannah's success was Richard Cumberland, whom Garrick called "the man without a skin," on account of his sensitiveness to criticism; he gave vent to his spleen on this occasion by reviewing the play as unfavourably as possible Sir Fretful Plagiary, in Sheridan's *Critic*, is a caricature of Cumberland. In his *Retaliation*, Goldsmith has immortalised him as—

"The Terence of England, the mender of hearts."

Two days later Hannah writes: "Last night was the ninth night of *Percy*. It was a very brilliant house; and I was there. Lady North did me the honour to take a stage box. I trembled when the speech against the wickedness of going to war was spoken, as I was afraid my lord was in the house,[1] and that speech, though not

[1] See Elwina's speech against war. Lord North was then Prime Minister, but in his actions he was "the mere mouthpiece of the King." Green says. "George was in fact sole minister, and the shame of the darkest hour of English history lies wholly at his door."

written with any particular design, is so bold and always so warmly received, that it frightens me; and I really feel uneasy till it is well over. Mrs. Montagu had a box again; which, as she is so consummate a critic, and is hardly ever seen at a public place, is a great credit to the play. Lady B—— was there of course, and I am told she has not made an engagement this fortnight, but on condition she should be at liberty to break it for *Percy*. I was asked to dine at the chancellor's two or three days ago, but happened to be engaged to Mrs. Montagu, with whom I have been a good deal lately. We also spent an agreeable evening together at Dr. Cadogan's, where she and I, being the only two monsters in the creation who never touch a card (and laughed at enough for it we are) had the fireside to ourselves; and a more elegant and instructive conversation I have seldom enjoyed. I met Mrs. Chapone one day at Mrs. Montagu's; she is one of *Percy's* warmest admirers; and as she does not go to plays, but has formed her judgment in the closet, it is the more flattering. I have been out very little except to particular friends. I believe it was a false delicacy, but I could not go to anybody's house, for fear they should think I came to be praised or to hear the play talked of."

The next extract contains an amusing anecdote; it begins with the remark that she is now as quiet as her heart could wish, and she adds that quietness is her definition of happiness: "I had no less than five invitations to dine abroad to-day, but preferred the precious and rare luxury of solitude. I was much diverted at the play the other night—When Douglas tears the letter which he had intercepted, an honest man in the shilling gallery, vexed it had fallen into the husband's hands instead of the lover's, called out—'Do pray send the letter to Mr. Percy.'" In the same letter Hannah asks her sisters if they cannot contrive to make a little jaunt, "if it were only for one night, and see the *bantling*."

One wonders that the sisters should need asking.

The success with which Hannah's play was meeting would surely be enough to make them eager to witness its performance. At all events they came up to London at this juncture, and Hannah's biographer has preserved some of the letters they wrote to their Bristol friends on the occasion, which seems to have more than satisfied their expectations. "Just returned from *Percy*," writes one sister; "the theatre overflowed prodigiously, notwithstanding their Majesties and the *School for Scandal* at the other house. Yes, we did overflow, the twelfth night! On entering the parlour, where Hannah was sitting alone, our eyes were greeted with the sight of a wreath, composed of a Roman laurel, ingeniously interwoven, and the stems confined within an elegant ring. From whence, you will ask, could such a fanciful thought proceed? I answer—from Mrs. Boscawen." The writer goes on to tell of Hannah's having refused an invitation to dine with a certain lady on Sunday, "which she, being of the Christian faction, declined." "Yesterday," she adds, "when we were all seated in the drawing-room in the Adelphi, a gentleman was announced by the name of Home (author of the tragedy of *Douglas*). Mr. Garrick took Hannah by the hand, and approaching the stranger, said he begged leave to introduce the *Percy* to the *Douglas:* upon which Mr. Home expressed his desire that the alliance might be again renewed: and all the company with pleasure took notice, it was the Douglas that first sued to the Percy."

Mrs. Garrick told the sisters that when they were at Althorn, Mr. Garrick had read *Percy* to all the party at Lord Spencer's.

Before the first edition of four thousand copies had been printed a fortnight, Cadell sent to Hannah for a corrected copy in order to hasten the printing of the second edition. The facts which we glean from the correspondence of Hannah and her sisters at this time are sufficient proof that the success of her play was

something real, and not a momentary flash, dazzling the eyes and turning the head of a simple schoolmistress, as some writers have tried to represent it.

There is no trace of Puritanism in this play, and there certainly is none in Garrick's epilogue which followed. Of Elwina's madness, in the last scene, Charlotte Yonge wrote: "Her ravings are really touching, and must have been very effective, but neither Hannah More nor her friends seem to have had the smallest scruple as to entertaining a Christian audience with suicide after the high Roman fashion;" and she adds that, "In those days the tragic stage was a conventional world, quite apart from any relation to the facts of history, manners, or real life, and had a code as well as customs of its own."

Fanny Burney's *Evelina* was published only a few months after the appearance of *Percy*, but, in spite of its phenomenal success, it brought only a few pounds to the author's pocket. For this reason many of her friends urged her to let her next attempt be something for the stage. Mrs. Thrale told her that if she could not do better than Hannah More, "who got nearly £400 for her foolish play, she deserved to be whipped"; but Mrs. Montagu, with more sense, reminded Fanny that the gifts of a novelist were not always those of a playwright, and that even Fielding had failed on the stage. She might have added the names of many other well-known writers, such as Pope and Smollett, who had in vain turned their attention to the drama. Fanny's friend, "Daddy Crisp," who, in spite of all that Garrick could do to help him along, had been an utter failure, cautioned her that play-writing would, for her, have its peculiar difficulties; her delicacy would debar her from those frequent lively freedoms without which comedy would lose wonderfully of its salt and spirit;[1] the detail in which she excelled had, he argued, no place in comedy, where all must be compressed into quintessence.

[1] See *Fanny Burney*, by Austin Dobson, 1903.

Percy had the most successful run of all the tragedies produced that winter, and, what is more, it was again successfully produced a few years later with Mrs. Siddons as Elwina. It was translated into German and acted in Vienna. It was also translated into French.

In January 1778, Hannah wrote : " Yesterday I dined at Sir Joshua's. Just as they were beginning to offer their nightly sacrifice to their idol Loo, I took it into my head to go and see Mrs. Barry in the mad scene in the last act of *Percy*, in which she is so very fine, that though it is my own nonsense, I always see that scene with pleasure. I called on a lady, not choosing to go alone, and we got into the front boxes. On opening the door I was a little hurt to see a very indifferent house. I looked on the stage, and saw the scene was the inside of a prison, and that the heroine, who was then speaking, had on a linen gown. I was quite stunned, and really thought I had lost my senses, when a smart man in regimentals began to sing, ' How happy could I be with either.' I started and rubbed my eyes, thinking I was in a dream ; for all this while I was such a dunce that I never discovered that they were acting *The Beggar's Opera !* At length I found that Lewis had been taken extremely ill, and that handbills had been distributed to announce another play. Many sober personages shook their heads at me, as much as to say, ' How finely we are caught.' Among these was Mr. D——, the Prebendary, who came under the same mistake : in another box was Dr. Percy, who, I vainly thought, looked rather glum. But the best of all was Sir William Ashurst, who sat in a side box, and was, perhaps, one of the first judges who ever figured away at *The Beggar's Opera*, that strong and bitter satire against the professions, and particularly his."

After all the excitement of these weeks, it is not surprising to find that Hannah's health had a slight breakdown. Her next letter, after giving the names of various friends she had been dining with, says : " Lady

Bathurst came to see me yesterday before I was up: 'tis well I was ill, or I should have had a fine trimming, for she makes breakfast for the chancellor every day before nine, during the whole winter. She is very angry that I go to see her so seldom. I am not sorry that if I do affront my friends, it is generally in this way: but I always think people will like me the less the more they see of me. Mrs. Garrick came to me this morning, and wished me to go to the Adelphi, which I declined, being so ill. She would have gone herself to fetch me a physician, and insisted upon sending me my dinner, which I refused: but at six this evening, when Garrick came to the Turk's Head to dine, there accompanied him, in the coach, a minced chicken in a stewpan, a canister of her fine tea, and a pot of cream. Were there ever such people! Tell it not in epic, or in lyric, that the great Roscius rode with a stewpan of minced meat with him in the coach for my dinner. *Percy* is acted again this evening; do any of you choose to go? I can write you an order; for my own part, I shall enjoy a much superior pleasure, that of sitting by the fire, in a great chair, and being denied to all company: what is *Percy* to this? . . . A friend has just sent me a letter she received from Mrs. Clive," from which here follows an extract—"I suppose you have heard of the uncommon success Miss More's play has met with, indeed very deservedly; I have not seen it, but have read it: it is delightful, natural, and affecting, and by much the best modern tragedy that has been acted in my time, which you know is a pretty while ago. As you are acquainted with her family, I know you will be pleased with her success. Mr. Garrick had the conducting it, and you know whatever he touches turns to gold."

The Garricks came to see her every morning during this "little illness." One day Garrick burst in upon her as if in a violent hurry, and said that he had just been to order mourning for himself and Mrs. Garrick—

had just settled everything with the undertaker, and now called for a moment to take a few hints for her epitaph. In which piece of fun Hannah was quite a match for him, for she instantly replied that he was too late, as she had already arranged for it with Dr. Johnson. She added, however, that, as she thought Garrick would praise her most, she would be glad to change, and as to her giving him hints—she had but one, that he should make the character as fine as possible.

As soon as the doctor would allow it, Mrs. Garrick took Hannah to Hampton. "We have been here a week," she writes at length. "Mrs. Sheridan is with us, and her husband comes down on evenings. I find I have mistaken this lady: she is unaffected and sensible, converses and reads extremely well, and writes prettily. Saturday, Lady Juliana Penn spent the afternoon with me; I like her much; she bears her misfortunes (the loss of the government of a vast province, and twenty thousand a year) with the constancy of a great mind. I was last night in some fine company. One lady asked what was the newest colour; the other answered that it was a *soupçon de vert*, lined with a *soupir étouffé et brodé de l'espérance*. Now you must not consult your old-fashioned dictionary for the word *espérance;* for you will there find that it means nothing but hope, whereas *espérance* in the new language of the times means rose-buds."

Although Hannah made so light of her illness, we see fro manother letter that she kept her room for three weeks after Mrs. Garrick had removed her to Hampton, and that during that time she was visited daily by the doctor, and treated for severe "rheumatism in the face" (neuralgia). While still suffering much pain, she wrote to her friend Mrs. Gwatkin, then in Paris, in a letter dated March 5 of that year: "I am very much pleased to find that *Percy* meets with your approbation. It has been extremely successful, far beyond my expectation,

and more so than any tragedy has been for many years. The profits were not so great as they would have been, had it been brought out when the town was full; yet they were such as I have no reason to complain of. The author's rights, sale of the copy, &c., amounted to near six hundred pounds (this is *entre nous*); and as my friend, Mr. Garrick, has been so good as to lay it out for me on the best security, and at five per cent., it makes a decent little addition to my small income. Cadell gave £150—a very handsome price, with conditional promises. He confesses (a thing not usual) that it has had a very great sale, and that he shall get a good deal of money by it. The first impression was near four thousand, and the second is almost sold. I do not wish to rise on anybody's fall; but it has happened most luckily for *Percy* that so many unsuccessful tragedies were brought out this winter. *The School for Scandal* continues to run with its usual spirit, and is as much the favourite of the town as ever. Fielding's comedy of *The Good-natured Man,* which was lost for so many years, is not yet brought out, nor do I think it will be this season, as the benefits and oratorios are begun. *Percy* has had a run of twenty-one nights."

CHAPTER VIII

THE DEATH OF GARRICK

Mrs. Gwatkin had asked Hannah to join her in Paris this spring, but the invitation had been declined. It was in her letter on this occasion that Hannah first mentions the philosopher of Fernay. "I should like prodigiously," she writes, "to take a peep at Voltaire."

After all the lionisation that our poetess has undergone this season, the change to country life and country stagnation of thought must have been a very great one. We find her, in one of her letters, describing a party at a friend's house at which she was one of the guests. "There were ten ladies and a clergyman. I was pleased with the assemblage, thinking the vanity of the sex would meet with its equilibrium in the wisdom of the profession: that the brilliant sallies of female wit and sprightliness would be corrected and moderated by the learned gravity and judicious conversation of the Rev. Theologue. I looked upon the latter as the centripetal acting against the centrifugal forces of the former, who would be kept within their orbit of decorum by his means. For about an hour nothing was uttered but words, which are almost an equivalent to nothing. The gentleman had not yet spoken. The ladies with loud vociferations, seemed to talk without thinking at all. The gentleman, with all the male stupidity of silent recollection, without saying a single syllable, seemed to be acting over the pantomime of thought. I cannot say, indeed, that his countenance so much belied his understanding, as to express anything: no, let me not do him that injustice; he might have sat for the picture of insensibility. I endured his

taciturnity, thinking that the longer he was in collecting, adjusting, and arranging his ideas, the more would he charm me with the tide of his oratorical eloquence, when the materials of his conversation were ready for display: but, alas! it never occurred to me that I had seen an empty bottle corked as well as a full one. After sitting another hour, I thought I perceived in him signs of pregnant sentiment, which was just on the point of being delivered in speech. I was extremely exhilarated at this, but it was a false alarm; he essayed it not. At length the imprisoned powers of rhetoric burst through the shallow mounds of torpid silence and reserve, and he remarked, with equal acuteness of wit, novelty of invention, and depth of penetration, that—we had had no summer! Then, shocked at his own loquacity, he double-locked the door of his lips, 'and word spoke never more.'"

But Hannah was not settling down to idleness in the country, for she tells her friend that she has already read all the Epistles through three times, and is partly through West's book on the Resurrection, "in my poor judgment a most excellent thing, calculated to confound all the cavils of the infidel, and to confirm all the hopes of the believer."

Hannah was still at Bristol when, on January 20, 1779, David Garrick, after an apparently short illness, breathed his last: his sorrowing widow at once desired her friend to come to her, and Hannah rose from the bed of sickness to attend this summons. On her arrival in London she wrote to her sisters as follows: "From Dr. Cadogan's I intended to have gone to the Adelphi, but found that Mrs. Garrick was that moment quitting her house, while preparations were making for the last sad ceremony; she very wisely fixed on a private friend's house for this purpose, where she could be at her ease. I got there just before her; she was prepared for meeting me; she ran into my arms, and we both remained silent for some minutes; at last she whispered, 'I have this moment embraced his coffin, and you come next.' She

soon recovered herself, and said with great composure, 'The goodness of God to me is inexpressible; I desired to die, but it is His will that I should live, and He has convinced me He will not let my life be quite miserable, for He gives astonishing strength to my body, and grace to my heart; neither do I deserve, but I am thankful for both.' She thanked me a thousand times for such a real act of friendship, and bade me be comforted, for it was God's will."

Mrs. Garrick then told Hannah all the circumstances of her husband's last illness, how they had been on a visit to Lord Spencer, at Althorpe, whither he had gone reluctantly, not feeling at all well: how during the visit he had been in such fine spirits that it had seemed hard to believe he was ill. He had arranged for his doctor to meet him on his return home; the latter ordered the usual remedies, and on the Sunday he had been again in good spirits and free from pain; then, on the appearance of unfavourable symptoms, his doctor had sent for two other physicians, "who gave him up the moment they saw him." "Poor Garrick," writes Hannah, "stared to see his room so full of doctors, not being conscious of his real state. No change happened till the Tuesday evening, when the surgeon who was sent for to blister and to bleed him, made light of his illness, assuring Mrs. Garrick that he would be well in a day or two, and insisted on her going to lie down. Towards morning she desired to be called if there was the least change. Every time that she had administered the draughts to him in the night, he always squeezed her hand in a particular manner, and spoke to her with the greatest tenderness and affection. Immediately after he had taken his last medicine, he said 'Oh dear,' and yielded up his spirit without a groan, and in his perfect senses. His behaviour during the night was all gentleness and patience, and he frequently made apologies to those about him for the trouble he gave them. . . . I paid a

melancholy visit to his coffin yesterday, where I found room for meditation, till the mind 'burst with thinking.'" And then she adds musingly: "His new house is not so splendid as the Adelphi, but it is commodious enough for all the wants of its inhabitant; and besides, it is so quiet, that he never will be disturbed till the eternal morning; and never till then will a sweeter voice than his own be heard. May he then find mercy!"

Of the preparations for the funeral she writes: "They are preparing to hang the house with black, for he is to lie in state till Monday. I dislike this pageantry, and cannot help thinking that the disembodied spirit must look with contempt upon the farce that is played over its miserable relics. But a splendid funeral could not be avoided, as he is to be laid in the Abbey with such illustrious dust, and so many are desirous of testifying their respect by attending."

Dr. Johnson speaks[1] of Garrick's death as a "stroke of death which has eclipsed the gaiety of nations, and impoverished the public stock of harmless pleasure." And Garrick had been a successful as well as a great actor; it has been said that no other actor ever died so rich. Besides house and furniture, he left his wife six thousand pounds in money and fifteen hundred pounds a year for life.

Hannah was present at the funeral service in the Abbey. She writes: "Just at three the great doors burst open with a noise that shook the roof, the organ struck up, and the whole choir, in strains only less solemn than the archangel's trump, began Handel's fine anthem. The whole choir advanced to the grave, in hoods and surplices, singing all the way: then Sheridan, as chief mourner; then the body (alas! whose body!) with ten noblemen and gentlemen pall-bearers, then the rest of the friends and mourners; hardly a dry eye—the very players, bred in the trade of counterfeiting, shed genuine

[1] See *Lives of the Poets*.

tears." Then after some solemn reflections on the vanity of this life she adds: "And the very night he was buried, the playhouses were as full, and the Pantheon was as crowded, as if no such thing had happened: nay, the very mourners of the day partook of the revelries of the night—the same night too."

She then relates how she and Mrs. Garrick returned to the desolate home at the Adelphi, and after mentioning Mrs. Garrick's wonderful tranquillity she adds: "But what was my surprise to see her go alone into the chamber and bed in which he had died that day fortnight. She had a delight in it beyond expression. I asked her the next day how she went through it. She told me very well: that she first prayed with great composure, then went and kissed the dear bed, and got into it with a sad pleasure."

They went down together to Hampton, and Dragon, the house-dog, ran to meet them just as he had run in former times to meet his master. Still Mrs. Garrick remained wonderfully calm, and when Hannah expressed her surprise at so much self-command, she replied: "Groans and complaints are very well for those who are to mourn but a little while; but a sorrow that is to last for life will not be violent and romantic."

Of her own grief at the loss of so kind a friend Hannah wrote: "I can never cease to remember with affection and gratitude so warm, steady, and disinterested a friend; and I can most truly bear this testimony to his memory, that I never witnessed in any family more decorum propriety, and regularity than in his: where I never saw a card, or even met (except in one instance) a person of his own profession at his table: of which Mrs. Garrick, by her elegance of taste, her correctness of manners, and very original turn of humour, was the brightest ornament. All his pursuits were so decidedly intellectual, that it made the society and the conversation which was

always to be found in his circle both interesting and delightful."

On the day of Garrick's funeral, February 2, 1779, Boswell wrote to Johnson : " Garrick's death is a striking event ; not that we should be surprised with the death of any man who has lived sixty-two years : but because there was a vivacity in our late celebrated friend which drove away the thoughts of death from any association with him. I am sure you will be tenderly affected by his departure."

Each of the funeral coaches was drawn by six horses, and Dr. Johnson was in one of them, and Sir Joshua Reynolds in another. The pall was supported on the one side by Lord Camden, the Earl of Ossory, Mr. Rigby, the Hon. H. Stanley, and J. Patterson, Esq. ; on the other side by the Duke of Devonshire, Earl Spencer, Viscount Palmerston, Sir W. Watkins Wynne, and Albany Wallis, Esq. After the nineteen coaches which carried the clergy of St. Martin's, the doctors, the managers of Drury Lane and Covent Garden, and the deputation of twelve from the company of each theatre, came four carriages with the members of the Literary Club, Lord Althorp, and Sir Charles Bunbury, Fox, Beauclerk, Burke, Dunning, Reynolds, Johnson, Coleman, and Gibbon. In the seven coaches which followed were many men of little less distinction ; Barré, Lord Lisburn, and Sir Grey Cooper ; Cumberland and Dr. Burney ; Fitzmaurice and Sir T. Mills ; Hoare and Hardinge ; Le Texier, the inimitable French mime ; Bate, the uproarious clerical editor of the *Morning Post ;* Angelo, the famous fencing-master ; Walker, of the *Pronouncing Dictionary*. " So splendid a funeral," adds Leslie, " followed by mourners of such various distinction, has seldom been vouchsafed to poet or painter, soldier or statesman." [1]

[1] See Leslie, *op. cit.*, and Fitzgerald's *Life of Garrick.*

CHAPTER IX

"THE FATAL FALSEHOOD"

It was in the spring of the year 1777 that General Howe, with a fine army at his back, had forced Washington to evacuate New York and New Jersey. A few months later he had routed Washington's little army of seven thousand men at Brandywine, and compelled them to abandon Philadelphia. Historians tell us that the unconquerable resolve with which Washington nerved his handful of beaten and half-starved troops in their camp at Valley Forge to face Howe's army through the winter is the noblest of his achievements. "The soldiers," says Prince, "were half naked and starving; many froze to death. Howe, with his twenty thousand British troops in Philadelphia, could easily have destroyed the depleted American army (reduced by March to four thousand men)." It was probably because Howe did not make proper use of this opportunity that he was replaced by Sir Henry Clinton. He returned to England early in 1779, and Hannah More met him at Mrs. Boscawen's a few weeks after the death of Garrick. "He is agreeable," she writes, "and remarkably modest in speaking of himself. He said it was a little hard, after a man had devoted his whole time and talents (however poor the latter might be) to the service of his country, that the event, and not his conduct, should determine his character; that to be unsuccessful and guilty should be the same thing, and that he should be held up as a public criminal for not doing what could not be done!"

The only friends received by Mrs. Garrick during the first weeks of her seclusion were Mrs. Montagu, Mrs.

Vesey, and the Ladies Bathurst, Edgecombe, and Spencer. Hannah writes: "She is refused to everybody, but she is so circumstanced as to be much solicited on that score, for I suppose Garrick had more, what we may call particular friends, than any man in England."

"My way of life," she continues, "is very different from what it used to be; you must not, therefore, expect much entertainment from my letters, for, as in the annals of states, so in the lives of individuals, those periods are often the safest and best which make the poorest figure. After breakfast I go to my own apartment for several hours, where I read, write, and work; very seldom letting anybody in, though I have a separate room for visitors; but I almost look on a morning visit as an immorality. At four we dine. We have the same elegant table as usual, but I generally confine myself to one single dish of meat. I have taken to drink half a glass of wine. At six we have coffee; at eight tea, when we have, sometimes, a dowager or two of quality. At ten we have salad and fruits. Each has her book, which we read without any restraint, as if we were alone, without apologies and speech-making."

About this time Hannah received an invitation from Miss Reynolds, who now no longer kept house for her brother, but had a small one of her own, to meet Dr. Burney and his daughter Fanny, but another engagement prevented her from going. "This Evelina," she writes, "is an extraordinary girl; she is not more than twenty, of a very retired disposition; and how she picked up her knowledge of nature and low life, her *Brangtons* and her St. Giles's gentry, is astonishing!"

"Lady Bathurst and I are very friendly," she writes. "Apsley House is finished, and most superbly furnished; and, which is not always the case with superb things, it is very beautiful, and teeming with patriotism, for all her glasses, hangings, and ornaments are entirely English."

Hannah did not take kindly to a life that was nothing more than a round of visits—it was not in her line. "Pleasure is by much the most laborious trade I know, especially for those who have not a vocation for it," she writes. "I worked with great assiduity at this hard calling on Monday. The moment I had breakfasted, I went to Apsley House: there I staid till two: I then made insignificant visits till four, when I went to Audley Street to dinner (Mrs. Boscawen's), where I staid till eight, and from thence went to spend the evening at Mrs. Vesey's, where there was a small assembly of about thirty people, and all clever. She keeps out dunces, because she never has cards. . . . I was asked to meet another party the same evening, but not being able to make a polypus of myself, I did not go. And yet I had rather slave at it all day now and then, than make a single little dull formal visit every afternoon."

It is said that nothing succeeds like success, and certainly there is nothing like it for spurring an author on to fresh labours. We find that Hannah, encouraged by the success of *Percy*, and constantly urged by Garrick to try her powers once more in the same way, had devoted all her spare time during the summer of 1778 to the writing of another tragedy. Garrick lived to read the first four acts, and was greatly taken with them. The fifth she completed shortly before his death. She brought it up to London with her, intending to leave it in the manager's hands till the following season, but Mr. Harris no sooner heard that the author of *Percy* had written another play, than he entreated her to let him produce it then and there. Unfortunately she yielded to his persuasions, no longer having the experienced Garrick to advise and caution her, and so it appeared at the very end of the season, when half the gay world had already deserted the metropolis, and none of the best actors could be procured for the leading parts.

In spite, however, of all the unfavourable circumstances which attended its appearance, *The Fatal Falsehood*, although it had nothing like the run of *Percy*, was "received with great applause," as the letters written by her sisters at the time sufficiently prove.

Hannah had been taken seriously ill in London just before, and one of her sisters came up from Bristol to nurse her. This sister, writing to the others at Bristol, said: "If the weather should be very warm, *The Fatal Falsehood* is to be played only three or four nights;" and she added, "Hannah seems mightily indifferent about the matter."

On her return from witnessing the first performance, this sister wrote: "Just returned from the house; the applause was as great as her most sanguine friends could wish. Miss Young was interrupted three different times in the speech on false honour, with bursts of approbation. When Rivers, who was thought dead, appeared in the fifth act, they quite shouted for joy. The curtain fell to slow music—and now for the moment when the fate of the piece was to be decided! The audience did her the honour to testify their approbation by the warmest applause that could possibly be given; for when Hull came forward to ask their permission to perform it again, they did give leave by three loud shouts and by many huzzaings."

The sister tells in this letter how on a lady's observing to one of her maidservants, when she came in from the play that her eyes looked red, as if she had been crying, the girl replied, by way of apology: "Well, ma'am, if I did, it was no great harm; a great many respectable people cried too!"

Miss Frances Reynolds was among the audience the first night, and wrote enthusiastically to Hannah: "I congratulate you, myself, and all my sex on the happy and most beautiful exhibition of your play last night. Nothing should have prevented me from testifying my

joy in person, but the apprehension that you might be much engaged this morning. I would wish to come when I could freely describe the sensations I felt—at least endeavour to describe them."

Mrs. Boscawen also wrote her congratulations : " For you may be sure," she adds, " I have had my spies *en campagne*, and I know the shouts of approbation and applause that have been so justly bestowed on you. I sent a coach full, and well stuffed with five, chiefly men, whose oaken sticks were not idle ; very unfashionable they would have been, had they remained so amidst a pit that formed one chorus of applause—not one dissenting voice. And when it was given out for Tuesday, my maid told me she thought ' they would have tore the house down,' with clapping ; for her part, she wept very much, I found—so did many around her, but all approved, nor did she ever see a new play that was so well applauded. I hope our friend Dr. Percy got in. (It seems the house was very full.) "

The Fatal Falsehood is dedicated to Hannah's friend the Countess Bathurst. For the story of the play the author seems to have relied almost entirely on her own imagination. The action takes place in Earl Guildford's castle, the castle of which the old town of Guildford still preserves the ruins.

It is something that Sheridan thought sufficiently well of this play to write its epilogue. In it he, like Garrick, alludes to the envy aroused in the breasts of male dramatists by a woman's success. He pretends to be a poetaster, lean with envy, whose angry words are first heard behind the scenes, and who then bursts upon the stage in a fury, crying—

> " On the dull audience let me vent my rage,
> Or drive these female scribblers from the stage."

CHAPTER X

WINTERS WITH MRS. GARRICK

HANNAH MORE spent the summer of 1779 at Bristol, but in December of that year she returned to London, to pass the rest of the winter with Mrs. Garrick at Hampton. The two ladies now lived very quietly, and Hannah was able to give most of her time to reading. Her first letter to her sisters says: "Mrs. Garrick and I read to ourselves *sans intermission*. Mr. Mathew Henry and Mr. David Hume (two gentlemen of very different ways of thinking on some certain points) at present engage a great part of my time. I have almost finished the sixth volume, and am at this moment qualified to dispute with the Dean of Gloucester on tonnage and poundage monopolies and ship-money."

In her next letter Hannah tells her sisters that she and Mrs. Garrick are as little acquainted with what passes in the world as though they were five hundred, instead of fifteen, miles out of it. "Poor Mrs. Garrick is a greater recluse than ever, and has quite a horror at the thought of mixing in the world again. I fancy, indeed, she will never go much into it. Her garden and her family amuse her; but the idea of company is death to her. We never see a human face but each other's. Though in such deep retirement I am never dull, because I am not reduced to the fatigue of entertaining dunces, or of being obliged to listen to them. We dress like a couple of Scaramouches, dispute like a couple of Jesuits, eat like a couple of aldermen, walk like a couple of porters, and read as much as any two doctors of either university."

Hannah was of opinion that Mrs. Garrick's activity, both of body and mind, had, humanly speaking, done more than anything else to preserve her life. She visited her husband's tomb in the Abbey, on the anniversary of her wedding day, and remarked that she intended to do the same on all her wedding-days, yet she never indulged in the least melancholy.

In those days there were no important social gatherings before Christmas, and Hannah tells her sisters that until after that festivity it was not the fashion to wear jewels or to dress at all. "This last custom," she adds, "has, I think, good sense and economy in it, as it cuts off a couple of months from the seasons of extravagance; but I fancy it redeems but little from the nights, for one may lose a good deal of money in a very bad gown."

A few days later she met Dr. Johnson at a quiet little gathering at Miss Reynolds's house. He was in poor health, but his mind had lost nothing of its vigour: "He never opens his mouth but one learns something," she writes; "one is sure either of hearing a new idea, or an old one expressed in an original manner. We did not part till eleven. He scolded me heartily as usual, when I differed from him in opinion, and, as usual, laughed when I flattered him. I was very bold in combatting some of his darling prejudices: nay, I ventured to defend one or two of the Puritans, whom I forced him to allow to be good men and good writers. He said he was not angry with me at all for liking Baxter. He liked him himself; 'but then,' said he, 'Baxter was bred up in the establishment, and would have died in it, if he could have got the living of Kidderminster. He was a very good man.' Here he was wrong, for Baxter was offered a bishopric after the restoration."

Some writers have asserted that Hannah More used to annoy Johnson by her exaggerated flattery, but she herself says in the letter we have been quoting, that

she never saw Johnson really angry with her but once and that his displeasure in that instance did him so much honour that she loved him the better for it. She says: "I alluded, rather flippantly, I fear, to some witty passage in *Tom Jones;* he replied, 'I am shocked to hear you quote from so vicious a book. I am sorry to find you have read it: a confession which no modest lady should ever make. I scarcely know a more corrupt work.' I thanked him for his correction, assured him I thought full as ill of it now as he did, and had only read it at an age when I was more subject to be caught by the wit than able to discern the mischief."

But Johnson went so far as to refuse to Fielding the great talents which are ascribed to him, and broke out, Hannah says, into a noble panegyric on his competitor, Richardson; who, he said, was as superior to him in talents as in virtue, and whom he pronounced to be the greatest genius that had shed its lustre on the path of literature.

At the close of Mrs. Garrick's first year of widowhood, Hannah helped her to send round her cards of thanks for sympathy in her bereavement. "I suppose," writes Hannah, "they include seven hundred people; six hundred of whom I dare say she will hardly ever let in again."

The next letter, written from Mrs. Garrick's London house, relates a bit of experience which must have been very amusing to look back on, though anything but pleasant at the time. "The other evening they carried me to Mrs. Ord's assembly; I was quite dressed for the purpose. Mrs. Garrick gave me an elegant cap, and put it on herself; so that I was quite sure of being smart; but how short-lived is all human joy! and see what it is to live in the country! When I came into the drawing-rooms I found them full of company, every human creature in deep mourning, and I, poor I, all gorgeous

in scarlet. I never recollected that the mourning for some foreign Wilhelmina Jacquelina was not over. However, I got over it as well as I could, made an apology, lamented the ignorance in which I had lately lived, and I hope this false step of mine will be buried in oblivion."

It was at this gathering that Hannah and Mrs. Thrale met for the first time. Mrs. Thrale paid her a good deal of attention and begged her to visit her. Fanny Burney and her father were also among the guests.

After Garrick's death Hannah never again felt the old zest and delight in any social functions, and we find her letters taking a graver tone. "The brightest circles do not amuse me," she writes, "and they are got at with so much trouble and expense, and loss of time in dressing, that such considerations would outweigh all the pleasure, if it were even much greater than it is."

Throughout her long literary life, extending over more than forty years, Hannah More never had any quarrels or differences with her publisher. When an acquaintance had been filling her ears with complaints over the hardships of an author's life, she wrote to her sisters: "For my part, I have made it a rule never to abuse either bookseller or manager, and therefore have gone on smoothly with them all. These complaints proceed chiefly from ignorance or unfairness; people expect more virtues from others than they themselves would be capable of exerting in the same situation. There are people in the world who think that I have more cause for complaint than Mrs ——; she raved, I said not a word; to complain and resent is very easy: but it is my defect to value myself on being above it; they are passionate, I am proud; that is the true difference; if they will tolerate my vice, I ought to endure their weakness; and so we may rub on well enough for the short time we shall last."

Hannah and her publisher were now busy preparing

a second edition of *The Fatal Falsehood.* Cadell gave her some good advice, but told her she was too good a Christian for an author. Charlotte Yonge is of the opinion that this remark sank very deeply into the young authoress's mind, and may have been influential in leading her to abandon all thought of again writing for the stage.

She next mentions one of Mrs. Delany's select little parties, where the number of guests never exceeded eight. Here she met on this occasion the Duchess-Dowager of Portland, heiress to the great Earl of Orford, and her friend Horace Walpole, the Earl's son, also the Countess of Bute, wife of the late Prime Minister, and daughter of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu ; Dowager Lady Leicester, and Lady Wallingford, whom she designates as "daughter of the Mississippi Law." Here too she met Mrs. Dashwood, "celebrated as the 'Delia' of Hammond, in his beautiful elegies, written, more than anything I have met with, in the spirit of his master the tender Tibullus." This is the first time Horace Walpole's name occurs in her letters.

"We had the finest party imaginable," she writes, "at Mrs. Boscawen's on Friday ; there was all the *élite* of London, both for talents and fashion ; I got into a lucky corner ; Mrs. Carter and I, who had not met before this winter, fastened on each other, and agreed not to part for the evening. We got Soame Jenyns, Mr. Pepys, and Mr. Cole into our little circle, and were very sprightly. It was to have been entirely a talking party, but our hostess very wisely put two card tables in the outer drawing-room, which weeded the company of some of the great, and all of the dull, to the no small accommodation of the rest."

Soame Jenyns was now in his seventy-seventh year.[1]

[1] This was in 1781. The *Dict. of Nat. Biog.* makes their first meeting in 1784, which is an error.

He had made his first appearance in the literary world with a book on the *Art of Dancing*, published in 1727; his *Enquiry into the Origin and Nature of Evil* had called forth a sharp and brilliant answer from Johnson, which was thought by some critics to be the best thing he ever wrote; in 1776, four years before the occasion Hannah here mentions, he had published his book on the *Internal Evidence of the Christian Religion*, which ran into many editions and brought him a considerable amount of fame. He was of a sociable disposition, and Cumberland is said to have remarked of him that he gave a great zest to every company he came into.

In a bright letter to her sisters written in the spring of this year, Hannah says: "My being obliged to walk so much makes me lose seeing my friends who call upon me; and what is worse, it makes me lose my time, which will never call on me again. Yesterday I spent a very agreeable day in the country. The Bishop of St. Asaph and his family invited me to come to Wimbledon Park, Lord Spencer's charming villa, which he always lends to the bishop at this time of the year. I did not think there could have been so beautiful a place within seven miles of London; the park has so much variety of ground, and is as *un-Londonish* as if it were an hundred miles off. . . . There was a good deal of company at dinner, but we were quite at our ease, and strolled about, or sat in the library, just as we liked. This last amused me much, for it was the Duchess of Marlborough's (old Sarah), and numbers of the books were presents to her from all the great authors of her time, whose names she had carefully written in the blank leaves, for I believe she had the pride of being thought learned, as well as rich and beautiful."

She next relates that "the gentlemen of the Museum have come and fetched away poor Mr. Garrick's legacy of the old plays and curious black-letter books." Though

Hannah More

From an engraving after the portrait by Miss Reynolds

they were not things to read, and were only valuable to antiquaries for their age and scarcity, she could not see them carried off without feeling sad at heart.

At a party at Mrs. Ord's she has again met Johnson: "Johnson told me he had been with the king that morning, who enjoined him to add Spenser to his *Lives of the Poets*. I seconded the motion; he promised to think of it, but said the booksellers had not included him in their list of the poets."

Dining at Mrs. Boscawen's shortly after this, she met Berenger, whom she found "all chivalry, and blank verse, and anecdote." He told her some curious stories of Pope, with whom he had been in the habit of spending the summer at his uncle's, Lord Cobham's; "of whom Pope asserts, you know, that he would feel the 'ruling passion strong in death,' and that 'save my country, heaven,' would be his last words." Berenger told Hannah that Pope, in his last moments, not being able to carry a glass of jelly to his mouth, was in such a passion at his own physical weakness, that he threw the jelly, glass and all, into Lady Chatham's face, and expired.

Hannah next tells how she has been to Miss Reynolds and sat for her picture. "Just as she began to paint, in came Dr. Johnson, who staid the whole time, and said good things by way of making me look well." The portrait which Miss Reynolds was then painting is the one which Thompson reproduced as a frontispiece to his book; it is perhaps the most attractive portrait of Hannah More in existence. The hair is raised somewhat high above the forehead, but is very simply dressed, with a single ornament. The expression of the sweet face and soft dark eyes is particularly pleasing.

As the spring advanced Mrs. Garrick and Hannah were once more at Hampton, and Hannah writes: "Hampton is very clean, very green, very beautiful and very melancholy, but the 'long dear calm of fixed

repose' suits me mightily after the hurry of London. We have been on the wing every day this week; our way is to walk out four or five miles, to some of the prettiest villages or prospects, and when we are quite tired, we get into the coach, which is waiting for us with our books, and we come home to dinner as hungry as Dragon himself. I took an airing by myself one morning, to Houndslow, and paid a visit to the Sheridans, at their country house, where I had a very agreeable hour or two."

Very soon after writing the above, Hannah paid a visit to her friends Dr. and Mrs. Kennicott, at Oxford, where she was introduced to many persons of note and learning, among whom was Dr. Horne, then President of Magdalen College, and afterwards Bishop of Norwich, with whom she formed a friendship that lasted till his death. Perhaps the best known of his writings is his Commentaries on the Psalms.

From Oxford Hannah proceeded to Bristol, where she remained till December 16, 1780, when she again joined Mrs. Garrick at Hampton. During the summer and autumn she was in regular correspondence with her friend Mrs. Boscawen, and several of the letters which passed between them have been preserved. Mrs. Boscawen, while on a visit to Lady Smith, widow of Sir Sidney Smith, and great granddaughter of Sacharissa, Countess of Sunderland, describes to Hannah that lady's Bible, which she saw in the library; it was printed in six volumes, in thin quarto, by Field, "The Pentateuch was the first, the historical books made the second; Ezra, Nehemiah, with the Psalms and Proverbs made the third; the fourth contained the Prophets; the fifth, the Gospels and Acts; the sixth, the Epistles and Revelations. Each had its peculiar title-page, telling its contents, over and above the general one." With the letter from which this extract is taken Mrs. Boscawen had sent Hannah

a copy of Mason's *Life of Gray*, which had just appeared. Hannah read this book with delight, and wrote enthusiastically of the pleasure that the perusal of Gray's letters had given her, remarking that her highest expectations had been fulfilled in reading them: "In my poor opinion they possess all the graces and all the ease which I apprehend ought to distinguish this familiar species of composition. They have also another and a higher excellence; the temper and spirit he almost constantly discovers in the unguarded confidence and security of friendship, will rank him amongst the most amiable of men; and his charming verses will give him a place among the first of lyric poets.

"The pleasure one feels," she adds, "on reading the letters of great and eminent persons, is of a very different kind from that which one receives from their more elaborate works; it is being admitted, as it were, to their very closets and bosoms: whereas the other is only being received in their drawing-rooms on state-days."

Hannah still keeps up her steady course of reading: "I am also plunged deep in the *Lusiad*," she writes, "and am now as much interested in the fortunes of the brave and pious Gamba as ever I was in those of the wandering Greek. *Cui hominum multorum vidit.* I began to fear all the enthusiasm was dead, it not having given any signs of life for a long time; but Camoens and M—— between them have contrived to rouse a small portion of it, so that whether, like the god Baal, it was actually dead, or was sleeping or gone on a journey, I cannot tell."

Of a French translation of Shakespeare's plays which her friend had sent her, Hannah writes: "How miserably inadequate must a translation of Shakespeare ever be! There is the stature, but where is the grace?—the shape,

but where is the mien? the features, but where is the eye—

'Glancing from earth to heaven, from heaven to earth'?

There is the body, but where is the living spirit, the animating principle? It is here, as well as in diviner things, that 'the letter killeth.' Yet I honour the Comte de Camelan and his associates. What lover of Shakespeare but must honour them?"

Hannah's next letter to the same friend tells how, to escape the tumult of the Bristol elections, she has "gone on a ramble; visited Wilton, where" she has seen the Apollo Belvidere, and the "fair statue which enchants the world," and been charmed with Lord Palmerston's sweet place at Romsey, though its being new-built has destroyed that satisfaction which arises from the association of ideas in surveying halls of "grey renown."

Mrs. Boscawen had sent Hannah Horace Walpole's pamphlet on Chatterton, and after reading it Hannah writes: "I am not quite a convert yet to his side of the Chattertonian controversy, though this elegant writer and all the antiquaries and critics in the world are against me; but I like much the candid regret he everywhere discovers at not having fostered this unfortunate lad, whose profligate manners, however, I too much fear, would not have done credit to any patronage."

Another book that Hannah has been reading is Johnson's *Life of Addison*: "There is the same exquisite discrimination of character," she writes, "the same exactness of criticism and moral discernment, which have distinguished and dignified the other writings of this truly great biographer." But she thinks it is a great pity Johnson has "given a quotation of forty or fifty pages from this old snarler's barking at *Cato*" (John Dennis), because "the slander will now be as durable as its object." She adds that in her opinion all that

Johnson says of *Cato* might be applied to his own *Irene*.

Hannah had requested Mrs. Boscawen to read *Percy* critically and give her her true and candid opinion upon it, and to this that lady replied: "I have read *Percy*, my dear Madam, a second time to-day aloud to the Duke and Duchess of Beaufort and Mrs. Leveson; they will tell you that tears often stopped my voice: they were exceedingly pleased with it, and indeed seemed worthy to judge, by the delight they expressed at particular passages which were wonderfully excellent . . . but my order is to blame, not to commend—to criticise, not to admire," and she adds that a play which has received the criticism of Mr. Garrick can want no other. "Mr. Garrick was undoubtedly the House of Lords to dramatic poets: and his fiat precludes, I really think, all other judgment."

Mrs. Garrick and Hannah spent Christmas together at Hampton, and in January they spent most of their time in the melancholy occupation of reading over David Garrick's private letters. "The employment," writes Hannah to her sisters, "though sad, is not without its amusement: it embraces the friendly correspondence of all the men who have made a figure in the annals of business or of literature for the last forty years; for I think I hardly miss a name of any eminence in Great Britain, and not many in France; it includes also all his answers: some of the first wits in the country, confessing their obligations over and over again to his bounty: money given to some, and lent to such numbers as would be incredible if one did not read it in their own letters. It is not the least instructive part of this employment to consider where almost all these great men are now. The play-writers, where are they? and the poets? are their fires extinguished? Did Lord Bath, or Bishop Warburton, or Lord Chatham, or Goldsmith, or

Churchill, or Chesterfield, trouble themselves with thinking that the heads which dictated these bright epistles would so soon be laid low? Did they imagine that such a nobody as I am, whom they would have disdained to have reckoned 'with the dogs of their flock,' should have had the arranging and disposing of them? I found my own old letters, but I thought it a breach of trust to take them till they are all finally disposed of."

During this winter Hannah devoted her quiet mornings at Hampton to writing her *Sacred Dramas*, which were nothing more nor less than a poetical dramatisation of four of the most striking stories of the Old Testament, namely: The Finding of Moses; The Slaying of Goliath; Belshazzar's Feast; and The Monologue of Hezekiah in his Sickness. "That you may not think I pass my time quite idly," she wrote to her sisters, "I must tell you that I had begun *Belshazzar;* I liked the subject, and have made some progress in it. But that, and all my other employments, have given way to the melancholy occupation of reading over with Mrs. Garrick the private letters of the dear deceased master of this melancholy mansion."

A little later she writes, from the Adelphi: "We have stolen away for a few days to town, but I am now so habituated to quiet, that I have scarcely the heart to go out, though I am come here on purpose. As to poor Mrs. Garrick, she keeps herself as secret as a piece of smuggled goods, and neither stirs out herself nor lets anybody in. The calm of Hampton is such fixed repose, that an old woman crying fish, or the postman ringing at the door, is an event which excites attention."

They were not long in town, however, for her next letter is from Hampton: "We courageously came back yesterday in all the snow; I was desirous to do it, having but a short time now to stay here, and I want a little for writing." She tells her sisters that she has

just waded through nine hundred pages of Madan's book, but still retains all her prejudices in favour of monogamy. "This saint will make sinners after his death," remarked a friend with whom she discussed Madan's book. It was Madan's theory that modern Christians laboured under a great mistake when they thought that Christ's morality was superior to that of Moses. "I believe," writes Hannah, "the Holy Scriptures were never before made the cover, nay, the vehicle, of so much indecency."

Her comment on the news sent her from Bristol of Burke's failure to be elected is worth quoting: "I envy Burke the consciousness of his own worth which he must feel on considering himself rejected only because his talents were a crime. But Providence has wisely contrived to render all its dispensations equal, by making those talents which set one man so much above another, of no esteem in the opinion of those who are without them. The direct contrary is the case with riches—they are most admired by those who want them, and this becomes a spur to industry. So that I do think that even in this world, things are carried on hand in hand more equally than many are willing to allow; for the 'painful pre-eminence' is so mixed with mortification and disappointment, that its pleasures I believe do not atone for the envy and plague which it brings. For is it not much better to be easy and happy now, than to be talked of a thousand years hence, when you either will not know it or will despise it?"

The above is one of the very few references Hannah ever made to the jealousy that her marked success had raised in the breasts of some of her less successful contemporaries. The bitter remarks of more than one contemporary aspirant to literary fame have been preserved by their respective biographers, and I am sorry to have to add that these gentlemen, while drawing all the valuable material they could from Hannah More's

vivacious letters, have never taken the trouble to give a thought to their author, and have even quoted her, or worked her remarks into interesting paragraphs for their own books without so much as telling their readers to whom they are indebted for their information. This has been especially the case where the biographers have despised the religion which Hannah More professed. Southey has preserved for us a reviewer's remarks on Hayley's poems, written about this time, in which he mentions that writer as the only poet of his day who had the courage to avow, in his poetical capacity, a belief in revelation. Hannah More too had that courage, and there can be little doubt that this fact increased the antagonism of her critics.

It was in June of the previous year that the "No Popery" riots had taken place, and it was in April of this year (1781) that Lord George Gordon was acquitted. Hannah wrote to her sisters: "I heard from a person who attended the trial of Lord George Gordon, that the noble prisoner (as the papers call him) had a quarto Bible open before him all the time, and was very angry because he was not permitted to read four chapters in Zechariah. I can less forgive an affectation of enthusiasm in him, because he is a man of loose morals: where the morals are exact I can make a great allowance for a heated imagination, strong prejudices, or a wrong bias of judgment. Though I have not the least doubt that he deserved punishment, yet I am glad he is acquitted, for it disappoints the party, and uncanonises the martyr." We see from Boswell's record that Johnson too was glad that this mob leader had been acquitted, "rather than that a precedent should be established for hanging a man for constructive treason."

"The other morning," she next writes, "Mrs. Garrick took me to Lever's museum; for, to the scandal of my taste, I had never seen it before. If any man had

the misfortune to be an atheist, I think he might be converted by seeing this vast book of various nature collected in a room, as Galen is recorded to have been, by his own discoveries in physiology. And yet Buffon is said to be an unbeliever ! "

A certain Mrs. B— is mentioned in Hannah's next letter as having repeatedly desired Johnson to look through her new play, entitled *The Siege of Sinope*. The philosopher always found means to evade it, till at last, when she pressed him so closely that there was nothing else to be done, he actually refused point blank to do it, and told her that she herself, by carefully looking it over, would be able to see if there was anything amiss as well as he could.

" But, sir," replied the lady, " I have no time. I have already so many irons in the fire."

" Why, then, madam," replied Johnson, now quite out of temper, " the best thing I can advise you to do is, to put your tragedy along with your irons."

In a very interesting note to this story, Roberts tells his readers that the same lady had previously attacked and irritated Garrick in much the same manner, and when he had finally rejected her tragedy, she had indulged her spleen in a novel, written with the express purpose of holding Garrick up to ridicule, and vilifying his character. Of this novel Hannah More had been prevailed upon to write a review in the *Gentleman's Magazine*. The review in question was very clever, and attracted no little attention, but Hannah, as she afterwards declared, had found so much pleasure in the free indulgence of her sarcasm, that she resolved never again to trust herself with the use of such a dangerous weapon. To this resolution she strictly adhered.

During this winter no less a personage than Bishop Lowth had been reading Hannah More's writings with admiration and delight, and although at this time

he was not personally acquainted with her, he was sufficiently enthusiastic to write the following verses in her honour:—

HANÆ MORÆ

Virgini piæ, eleganti ingenio, facundia et sapientia pariter illustri.

'Omnes Sulpiciam legant puellæ,'
Omnes hanc pueri legant senesque,
Omnes hanc hilares, et hanc severi.
Quae palmam geminas tulit per artes,
'Et Vinctæ pede vocis et solutæ!'
Cujus qui pede legerit soluta,
Nullam dixerit esse tersiorem!
Huic adsunt Charites faventque Musæ,
Dum sic pectora Virginum tenella
Pulchris imbuit artibus, sequaces
Exemplo monitis, amore, nutu,
Informans animos; stiloque signat,
Mox ventura quod Addisonianis
Possint secula comparare chartis.

Dr. Kennicott took a copy of them out of his pocket as he was going in to dinner one day at Mrs. Garrick's, and handed them to Hannah, who, quite ignorant of the contents of the paper she had received, gave it to another guest and asked him to read them aloud for the benefit of the company! This he did to her no small confusion.

In sending a copy of the verses to her friend Mrs. Boscawen, Hannah wrote: "I can better send you the Bishop's verses than could give them to you, for reasons which will be clear enough when you see them; as, without the least affectation, I am confounded by the praise which he gives me only because he does not know me. I would not wish any copy to be taken, as I would not for the world they should get into print, which would never be attributed to accident, but to the most egregious vanity in me; and the Bishop writes so little, and so excellently, that people are glad to catch at anything of his."

"When I was in Oxford last summer," she writes to Mrs. Boscawen, "I said so much in commendation of

my favourite book, *De l'histoire de Messieurs de Port Royal*, that it excited great desire in several reverend doctors to see it, no one there having ever met with it but Dr. Horne, who admired it extremely (*vous savez qu'il a une petit teinture de mystique*). The libraries were searched, but no such book could be found. Mrs. Kennicott repeating my account of it to the Bishop of Llandaff, he was resolved to get it, and accordingly sent to Holland for two sets ; but received for answer that it was quite out of print, and never could be got, but by chance in a catalogue." Hannah begs Mrs. Boscawen to lend her copy to Mrs. Kennicott, adding, " I wish some of these great divines would translate it, with all its fire of devotion, and without any of the smoke ; which, however, does not conceal its brightness. I think it would do a great deal of good."

Hannah's aged father had sent her some verses he had amused himself with writing about this time, and Hannah acknowledged them in a bright letter to her sisters. " Tell my father," she writes, " I am quite delighted with his verses, and particularly that he could write them in so good a hand ; I have put them among my curiosities. I do not think I shall write such verses at eighty-one." She then relates how, on Friday evening, she had been at Mr. Tighe's to hear him read Jephson's tragedy, and was reminded of Johnson's remark, that " Praise is the tribute which every man is expected to pay for the grant of perusing a manuscript." " Think," she says in this letter, " of Johnson's having apartments in Grosvenor Square ! but he says it is not half so convenient as Bolt Court." She has spent a very agreeable day at Mrs. Delany's. " Her inseparable friend the Dowager-Duchess of Portland was there. This charming Duchess is very kind to me, and honours me with particular attention. She has invited me to spend some time in the summer at Bulstrode. Perhaps

you do not know that she is Prior's 'noble, lovely, little Peggy.' She remembers him perfectly well, and promises I shall read a quarto manuscript which he left to her father, Lord Orford, which contains *Dialogues of the Dead*, in the manner of Lucan."

Hannah's descriptions of the parties she goes to are always entertaining. Of a gathering at Mr. Pepys's [1] she writes: "There was all the pride of London—every wit, and every wit-ess, though these, when they get into a cluster, I have sometimes found to be as dull as other people; but the spirit of the evening was kept up on the strength of a little lemonade, till past eleven, without cards, scandal, or politics. Mrs. Boscawen threw me into no small confusion; she got among the men, not less than twenty, all *beaux esprits*, and gave them all privately Bishop Lowth's verses to read."

"A very affecting circumstance happened yesterday," she continues. "Mrs. Garrick and I were invited to an assembly at Mrs. Thrale's. There was to be a fine concert, and all the fine people were there; but the chief object was to meet the Brahmin and the two Parsees, and I promised myself no small pleasure in seeing the disciples of the ancient Zoroaster, for such these are, and worshippers of fire. Just as my hair was dressed, came a servant to forbid our coming, for that Mr. Thrale was dead! A very few hours later, and he would have died in the assembly. What an awful event! He was in the prime of life, but had the misfortune to be too rich, and to keep too sumptuous a table, at which he indulged too freely. He was a sensible and respectable man. I am glad the poor lady has in her distress such a friend as Dr. Johnson; he will suggest the best motives of consolation."

Nothing was more distasteful to Hannah More than a "crush," no matter how great the titles of those who

[1] Afterwards Sir W. W. Pepys, Bart.

formed it. "The other night," she writes, "we were at a very great and full assembly. My distaste of these scenes of insipid magnificence I have not words to tell. Every faculty but the sight is starved, and that has a surfeit. I like conversation parties when they are of the right sort, and I do not care whether it be composed of four or forty persons, because if you know and like the generality of them nothing is more easy than to pick out a snug pleasant corner; whereas it is impossible to do so when two or three hundred persons are continually coming in, popping a courtesy, exhibiting their fine persons, and popping out again, or nailing themselves down to a card-table."

CHAPTER XI

THE "SACRED DRAMAS"

In the spring of the year 1781 we still find Hannah devoting every spare minute of her time to the completion of her *Sacred Dramas*, while her poem entitled *Sensibility* is already in circulation among her literary friends, though it has not yet been published. "Mrs. Kennicott tells me," she writes, "that Bishop Lowth insists upon my publishing *Sensibility*, and all my other poems collected, immediately, that people may have them all together."

After a few more weeks in London, Mrs. Garrick and Hannah ran down to Hampton again for a little country air, but they did not stay long, and were soon again at the Adelphi, whence Hannah writes to her sisters: "We are just returned from Hampton. I carried *Belshazzar* with me there, thinking that in such a scene of quiet and repose I should be likely to write a great deal, but the beautiful scenes of the country, especially at this time of the year, when all nature is young and blooming, take such possession of my mind, and dissipate it so much, that I could sooner think of writing in all the bustle of London, than in the still tranquillity of Hampton; I mean unless I were settled there long enough for the novelty of rural objects to wear off."

Before they made this little break in their town life, as well as on their return to London, the two ladies were almost daily at some interesting gathering in the house of one friend or another. Hannah mentions among others a particularly agreeable evening spent at the Bishop of St. Asaph's, where she "had the pleasure of

a vast deal of snug chat with the Bishop, Horace Walpole, Mrs. Montagu, and Elizabeth Carter. The very names show us that Hannah knew what was good, both intellectually and conversationally.

In those days Hannah More's fame rested on her poetical writings only, and in this connection, her remarks on Mr. Ramsay's newly written *Essay on the Harmony of Numbers, and on Versification*, are interesting. "He wished me to hear it read, and convened a small party of wits. It is scientific and ingenious, but I do not allow him his positions, and very pertly told him so, for he seems to set written rules above the 'nicely judging ear,' which I will never allow, and he denies Pope to have been an excellent harmonist, which I will never allow neither."

"Tuesday we were a very small and very choice party at Bishop Shipley's," she writes; "Lord and Lady Spencer, Lord and Lady Althorp, Sir Joshua, Langton, Boswell, Gibbon, and, to my agreeable surprise, Dr. Johnson, were there. Mrs. Garrick and he had never met since her bereavement. I was heartily disgusted with Mr. Boswell, who came up stairs after dinner, much disordered with wine, and addressed me in a manner which drew from me a sharp rebuke, for which I fancy he will not easily forgive me! Johnson came to see us the next morning, and made a long visit. On Mrs. Garrick's telling him she was more at her ease with persons who had suffered the same loss as herself, he said that was a comfort she could seldom have, considering the superiority of his merit, and the cordiality of their union. He reproved me with pretended sharpness for reading *Lès Pensées de Pascal* or any of the Port-Royal authors; alleging that, as a good Protestant, I ought to abstain from books written by Catholics. I was beginning to stand upon my defence, when he took me with both hands, and with a tear running down his cheeks, 'Child,' said he, with the most affecting earnest-

ness, 'I am heartily glad that you read pious books, by whomsoever they may be written.'"

The letter we have just quoted has a particular value for those who wish to know the real Hannah More, and to be able to distinguish the true from the false, in what has been said of her by contemporary writers. Boswell never forgot the reproof that he received from her on that occasion, and every time he refers to her in his biography of Johnson, he shows his dislike for her.

It is curious that Johnson should have questioned Hannah's wisdom in reading books by Catholic authors, in the presence of Mrs. Garrick, who was herself a devout member of the Roman Church.

The Dean of Gloucester (Hannah's old friend, Dean Tucker), had sent her a presentation copy of his new work on Locke, and she writes: "I have not yet had the manners to write and thank him for it. I am afraid it will draw upon him a number of enemies and answers, which at his time of life cannot be very agreeable. I believe where the spirit of controversy has once possessed the mind, no time can weaken it."

On Monday night she has been at a party at Mrs. Vesey's, who, she writes, had "collected her party from the Baltic to the Po, for there was a Russian nobleman, an Italian virtuoso, and General Paoli. In one corner was the pleasantest group in the world, and having peeped into the various parties in both rooms, I fixed upon that which I liked best. There were the agreeable Provost of Eton (Dr. Barnard), Mrs. Boscawen, Mr. Pepys, Mr. Walpole, and the Bishop of Killaloe. The conversation was quite in my way, and in a great measure within my reach; it related chiefly to poetry and criticism."

Mrs. Garrick was now beginning to be a little more cheerful in her own home, and to have some small entertainments. Hannah describes one of these: "Johnson was in full song, and I quarrelled with him sadly. I

accused him of not having done justice to the *Allegro* and *Penseroso*. He spoke disparagingly of both. I praised *Lycidas*, which he absolutely abused, adding, 'If Milton had not written the *Paradise Lost*, he would have only ranked among the minor poets; he was a Phidias that could cut a Colossus out of a rock, but could not cut heads out of cherry-stones.'"

The above well-known saying of Dr. Johnson's is often quoted, but in the above letter we have it first hand, and written down on the very day on which Johnson uttered it, and by the person to whom it was uttered. Boswell repeats it in his account of Johnson's visit to Oxford three years later, as reported by Mrs. Kennicott in the Doctor's presence.

At this party Boswell reminded Hannah of "a very mirthful conversation at my dear Mrs. Garrick's, and my being made by Sir William Forbes the umpire of a trial of skill, between Garrick and Boswell, which could most nearly imitate Dr. Johnson's manner. I remember I gave it for Boswell in familiar conversation, and for Garrick in reciting poetry."

"Mr. Walpole has done me the honour of inviting me to Strawberry Hill," she writes in the same letter: "as he is said to be a shy man, I must consider this as a great compliment." She winds up this letter with a *bon mot* of Sheridan's. On a friend's mentioning to him the ill-success of a late tragedy, which was full of mythology and tiresome allusions to Pagan deities, he answered (from *Oronooko*), "His own Gods disown him."

Her next letter tells her sisters she has now put an end to her pleasurable campaign, and that they are going to spend most of the time still left to them in the country. "I have refused to make any more engagements; indeed, I am quite tired of assemblies and conversation parties, and long for *disengagement* (if there be such a word) and leisure." She has been to a farewell party at Mrs. Vesey's, and feels sad to think that her aged friend is

going to Ireland in her bad state of health and advanced age. "It was a very choice party. Mr. Burke came and sat next to me for an hour. I complained of my false countrymen, and he repeated my epitaph in Redcliff Church. I was astonished that he had not forgotten it." (Burke had failed to be re-elected as M.P. for Bristol.) "The Bishop of Chester (Dr. Porteus), was on my other hand, and the conversation was kept up with great liveliness. I asked the bishop if he thought he should carry his bill against Sunday amusements through both houses. Burke said he believed it would go through their house, though his pious friend Wilkes opposed it with all his might. Oriental Jones was with us; but he is one of those great geniuses whom it is easier to read than to hear; for whenever he speaks, it is with seeming reluctance, though master of many languages."

After paying a short visit to the Dowager Duchess of Portland in her country home, Hannah returned to Bristol in June 1781, bringing Mrs. Garrick with her. Mrs. Garrick spent a month with the sisters, and in the following December Hannah again joined her at Hampton.

Hannah had sent the manuscript of her *Sacred Dramas* to various friends to read and criticise, and in the early part of the year 1782 she received a letter from Mrs. Kennicott, telling her that she and Dr. Kennicott had read over her *Hezekiah*'s *Reflections* with all the malice she could wish them to exercise, and she adds: "We think the lines sweetly pretty, but we doubt whether there is not more of the spirit of Christianity in them than ought to be put into Hezekiah's mouth. Is it probable he had so settled a belief in the general judgment? If there is to be a soliloquy in the drama, may it not be a little shortened."

On January 17, 1782, Hannah wrote to tell her sisters that she had the day before returned the last proofs of

her new book to Mr. Strahan, and expected her book to be out in a few days, though she did not know the date fixed for its publication or the price at which it was to be sold. "I trust all to Cadell's prudence, I desired him to charge it as low as he can. I actually feel very awkward about this new book. Strangers who read it will, I am afraid, think I am good; and I would not willingly appear better than I am, which is certainly the case with all who do not act as seriously as they write. I think sometimes of what Prior makes Solomon say of himself in his fallen state: 'They brought my proverbs to confute my life.'"

Within three weeks of the day on which the above was written, Hannah's new volume, containing the *Sacred Dramas* and her poem entitled *Sensibility*, was given to the public. This work, of which she was destined to outlive the copyright, subsequently passed through nineteen editions.

The *Sacred Dramas* open with a six-page introduction in blank verse, in which the poetess asks her readers why we should read with such zest the classic tales of Deucalion and practically neglect the Biblical account of the Flood; why we should study the life of Hercules and neglect that of Samson; why we should read the story of Iphigenia, the victim of a father's vow, and not that of Jephtha's daughter; why we should be more affected by the story of Nisus and Euryalus than by that of David and Jonathan.

It has been said that after the production of *The Fatal Falsehood* Hannah never again wrote for the stage, and in a sense that is true; but her mind was still full of the dramatic rules and arts which the preparation of her plays and Garrick's careful criticism of them had taught her, when she turned her thoughts to this new effort, and it is not surprising that it should have taken a dramatic form, written as it was in the very home of England's greatest actor, and in the daily companionship of his

widow, who herself was no mean critic of dramatic literature, and had herself been on the stage. Hannah More tells us, in her introduction to one of the later editions, that in this work she rather aspired after moral instruction than the purity of dramatic composition, and gives this as her reason why some of the speeches are so long that they retard the action. She also explains that it was her desire to benefit her youthful readers that led her to make some of her Jewish characters speak too much like Christians. Her main object was to write for the young, and for that reason she left out the story of Saul's daughter in that of David, as "there would always be time enough for the young to have their passions wakened."

From what she has said in her other prefaces, written in her old age, it is clear that Hannah had in her mind at this time some idea as to the possibility of purifying the stage and utilising it as a powerful means for good, and it is more than probable that she had some thought of making her *Sacred Dramas* capable of being produced upon the stage. In a note to them, she wrote: "It would not be easy, nor perhaps proper, to introduce sacred tragedies on the English stage. The pious would think it profane, while the profane would think it dull. Yet the excellent Racine, in a profligate country and a voluptuous court, ventured to adapt the story of *Athalie* to the French theatre, and it remains to us a glorious monument of its author's courageous piety, while it exhibits the perfections of the dramatic art."

More than ten years after their first appearance, Tate Wilkinson proposed to bring these *Sacred Dramas* upon the stage at Hull, and would have done so, Thompson tells us, had not an outcry arisen against the propriety of such a project. That they show a strong dramatic instinct no competent critic will deny. The probability is that when she wrote them she was struggling between

her natural bent towards the drama and her resolution to become, before everything else, a Christian in the truest and noblest sense of the word. Her *Sacred Dramas* show an attempt, if nothing more, to mingle these two aims in one.

CHAPTER XII

THE MYSTERIOUS LADY OF THE HAYSTACK

WHILE riding in the neighbourhood of the village of Flax Bourton, near Bristol, one of the young ladies at the Misses More's school in Bristol happened to catch sight of a beautiful woman's hand as it was stretched out to gather blackberries near a haystack. The shape and delicacy of the hand, and of the arm too, as she further noticed, made her curious to see who its owner could be; she halted, and soon discovered that the mysterious hand belonged to a beautiful young girl, who, while her lovely features bore the stamp of the highest aristocracy, was clad in miserable rags from head to foot. When accosted, she shrank back and appeared anxious to hide herself from further scrutiny.

When the young lady returned to the school with the report of what she had seen, much curiosity was aroused as to who this mysterious young person could be, and where she had come from. The Misses More caused a search to be made for the young girl, and she was soon discovered, near the spot where the young lady had first seen her, and as she either could not, or would not, answer the questions that were put to her, the ladies wanted to bring her into Bristol, but she refused to leave the spot, so there was nothing for it but to bring to her some of the necessaries of life of which she was so destitute. It was not long before the ladies of the neighbourhood became so interested in her that they readily supplied her with the necessaries of life, and she appears to have lived under the haystack for nearly three years, during

which she could never be enticed into a house, for she said, "Men dwelt there." It seems incredible to us of the twentieth century that the authorities should have allowed the poor creature to live for three winters under a haystack, in so lonely a spot. But this they appear to have done, and it was not till after this time had elapsed that the Misses More succeeded in getting her removed to a private home, and supported there by the subscriptions their kind hearts had led them to collect on her behalf.

Among those of Hannah's friends who contributed most largely to the support of the unfortunate "Louisa," as she was called, were Lord and Lady Bathurst; their interest and sympathy enabled Hannah to raise a fund sufficient to maintain her in comfort in a private home near Bristol, under the supervision of herself and her sisters. Every possible effort was made both to restore the poor girl to reason, and to trace her identity, but without the least success. She eventually died at Grey's Hospital in a state of hopeless insanity. From the few words she occasionally dropped, it was thought that she was of German origin.

This is all that is known about the poor maniac, but Thompson relates that once, when she was in the private home, she was heard to exclaim, on seeing a carriage with several horses drive past, "My father's carriage had eight horses," and then, as if recollecting herself, she had relapsed again into her melancholy silence, and refused to utter another word. Thompson also tells us that one day an elegantly dressed young man drove up to the home and asked to see Louisa. He was brought into her room, and on her seeing him she burst into tears. He himself was greatly affected, and soon drove away, without saying whence he came or who he was.

Many were the stories which spread through the neighbourhood as to who "Louisa" really was, and

whence she had come ; the report which seems to have been most credited said that she was Mademoiselle La Freulin, an illegitimate daughter of the Emperor Francis I., who, being unkindly treated by those in whose charge she had been left, had disappeared suddenly, and in a most mysterious manner, shortly before the time that Louisa appeared under the Bristol haystack.

On January 17, 1782, Hannah More wrote to her sisters from Hampton, " How does poor wretched Louisa ? You have not sent me the halfpenny ' Tale of Woe,' which I wrote ; it may be of use in procuring subscriptions. Mrs. Garrick and I go to London before Wednesday —she to her mass, and I to my mantua-maker—she to be daubed with ashes, and I to be decorated with vanities. And now we are upon vanities, what do you think is the reigning mode as to powder ?—only turmerick, that coarse dye which stains yellow. The Goths and Vandals, the Picts and Saxons are come again. It falls out of the hair, and stains the skin so, that every pretty lady must look ' as yellow as a crocus,' which I suppose will become a better compliment than ' as white as a lily.' "

Her new book is out at last, and she writes : " After all, the kindest thing to my friends is not to send them a book, for a present from the author is very inconvenient, as I have often found to my cost : since it forces the person so distinguished to write against their conscience, and to praise what, perhaps, they secretly despise. Besides, as I have mentioned all my poetical friends, it would be rather awkward after offering the incense, to thrust the censor in their faces."

In reply to a letter from Hannah, Mrs. Boscawen now wrote : " You are so afraid that strangers will think you good. Is it *you*, my dear friend, who say that ? Read the sixteenth verse of the fifth chapter of the Gospel of St. Matthew. When they read your dramas they will think you good. I am not afraid so, I hope so, else I

am sure they must think you a hypocrite ; there is but that alternative, ' for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh,' and if you can so speak, and not out of an honest and good heart, *tant pis pour vous ;* but I never yet suspected that any one could bring ' your proverbs to confute your life.' "

Shortly after this, Mrs. Boscawen again wrote to Hannah : " ' Boast we not a More ! ' so says the theatre at Bristol, with peculiar propriety and emphasis. The learned cells of Oxford inscribe their acknowledgment of her authority " (this letter is written from Badminton). In the same letter she tells Hannah that Lord Monboddo "is returned on his galloping nag to Scotland . . . He is well off that I did not cry ' Stop thief,' for he carried with him all Miss More's works which I had lent him. . . . His books will never be read, but that is no amends for depriving me of mine."

This eccentric nobleman was, about this time, very anxious to become the second husband of Mrs. Garrick, and it is quite possible that he hoped by reading Hannah's books to please her friend. Horace Walpole declared in a letter to Mr. Mason, bearing the date August 1782, that Mrs. Garrick had rejected Lord Monboddo ; and she rejected him again not long after this.

Hannah More was always a firm champion of her own sex, and she could not bear to see any woman draw ridicule upon herself by unwomanly conduct. In a letter to Mrs. Boscawen, written from Bath, she says : " Being here, naturally reminds me to speak of Mrs. Macaulay, I feel myself extremely scandalised at her conduct, and yet I did not esteem her ; I knew her to be absurd, vain, and affected, but never could have suspected her of the indecent, and I am sorry to say, profligate turn which her late actions and letters have betrayed. The men do so rejoice and exult, that it is really provoking ; yet have they no real cause for triumph ; for this woman is

far from being any criterion by which to judge of the whole sex; she was not feminine either in her writings or her manners; she was only a good, clever man. Did I ever tell you, Madam, an answer her daughter once made me? Desirous, from civility to take some notice of her, and finding she was reading Shakespeare, I asked her if she was not delighted with many parts of *King John?*—'I never read the *Kings*, ma'am,' was the truly characteristic reply."

Hannah had been reading the letters of Shenstone, and his correspondents, and thought them the worst collection ever published with real names; except those of the Duchess of Somerset. "Do not you, my dear madam," she writes to Mrs. Boscawen, "find something touching in a real correspondence, however indifferently executed? To see a commerce of affection carried on between a set of persons from their youth, when all is gay and smiling; then to have the same people arriving at the next period, when they are the slaves of cares, of vexation, of disappointment; and then to watch them fall one by one, through the broken arches of the bridge of life, till, perhaps but one is left of the social set; and surely in this case, '*It is the survivor dies*,' last of all, he himself falls, and you are told in a note, perhaps, 'That this ingenious gentleman, just as he had attained some important point which had been the object of his ambition, or reached the summit of his wishes by the possession of an ample fortune—died.'"

From the next letter to her sisters from London it is clear that she was not altogether sanguine as to the success of the new book. The word *Sacred* in the title is a damper to the *Dramas*. She writes, "It is tying a millstone about the neck of *Sensibility*, which will drown them both together. . . . Mrs. Montagu, Mrs. Chapone, and Mrs. Carter are mightily pleased that I have attacked that mock feeling and sensibility which is at once the

boast and disgrace of these times, and which is equally deficient in taste and truth."

In the summer of the year 1780, Mrs. Boscawen had sent Hannah a copy of a book called *Cardiphonia*, written by the Rev. John Newton of Olney, and after reading half of it Hannah wrote to her friend: "I am to thank you for *Cardiphonia*. I like it prodigiously: it is full of vital experimental religion. I thought I liked the first three letters best, but I have not read half the book. Who is the author? From his going a little out of his way to censure the Latin poets, I suspect he is of the calumniated school, though I have found nothing but rational and consistent piety." Two years later we find her begging her sisters to ask Dr. Stonehouse if he has read *Cardiphonia*, so it is clear that the book impressed her much.

"I am up to the ears in books," writes Hannah; "I have just finished six volumes of Jortin's sermons; elegant but cold, and very low in doctrine—'plays round the head, but comes not near the heart;' *Cardiphonia* does; I like it much, though not every sentiment or expression it contains." The writer of this book was also destined to impress her deeply—so deeply indeed as to affect the whole current of her after life.

"I have also gone through three very thick quartos of Mr. Gibbon's *History of the Roman Empire*—a fine, but insidious narrative of a dull period; this I read aloud every day from dinner to tea. It is melancholy to observe the first corruptions of Christianity, in the fourth century, and I never rise from the book without feeling disgusted. Gibbon is a malignant painter, and though he does give the likeness of depraved Christianity, he magnifies deformities, and takes a profane delight in making the picture as hideous as he can. Indeed, in the last two volumes he has taken some pains to hide the cloven foot; but whenever a Christian emperor or bishop

of established reputation is brought forward, his encomiums have so much coldness, and his praises so much sneer, that you cannot help discovering contempt where he professes panegyric. But of all the birds in the air, who do you think is his favourite—the strict and rigid Athanasius! Of all the saints and all the fathers, I should never have guessed he would have been the object of Mr. Gibbon's applause. Julian, you may naturally suppose, is the man after his own heart; I expected it would be so. He is more decent on the subject of Constantine's conversion than I expected; though indeed I should be very sorry that the truth of the Christian religion hung by so slender a thread as that miracle. However, I am now plunging into other studies than the disputes of Arius and his antagonists, with which my head has been filled, and am pleasantly engaged to spend the evening with Aeneas, at Evander's rustic banquet; which, however, I shall not half enjoy, because I know that my favourite Pallas will be killed before I go to bed."

Dining, a few days after this, with Lady Midleton, Hannah met, among others, Miss Carter and Jonas Hanway, and she writes: "I was quite flattered with the many cordial things good Jonas Hanway said to me about the *Dramas*. He told me he had sat down to read them with fear and trembling, as he had persuaded himself it was taking an undue liberty with the Scriptures; but he had no sooner finished them than he ran off to the bookseller, bought three or four, and went to a great boarding-school, where he had some little friends. He gave the governess the book, and told her it was part of her duty to see that all her girls studied it thoroughly."

Spending the evening with Mrs. Kennicott, Hannah met "Mythology Bryant," as she playfully calls him. She found him as pleasant as he was learned; he told her an amusing story of how, when going to Windsor to

present one of his books that morning, he had been met by one of the little Princes, the youngest of them, in the ante-chamber, and the child had begged to look at his book. "When it was put into his hands, he held it upside down, and glancing his eyes for a moment over the pages, returned it with an air of important graciousness, pronouncing it—'Excellent.'"

As usual, Mrs. Garrick and Hannah ran down to Hampton for a breath of country air in the midst of their London gaieties, and Hannah writes that being out of doors the greater part of the time did her a vast deal of good "after being smoke-dried in this 'scene of sin and coal-dust.'"[1] What would she have thought of the London atmosphere in our day?

"I dined to day," she writes, "at Apsley House. I was exceedingly diverted with my Lord Chancellor, who, as soon as he saw me, cried out, 'Well, what do they say? Is the Ministry to go out?' I could not help saying he put me in mind of Sir Robert Walpole, who, on being asked the same question, replied, 'I really do not know; I have not seen the papers.'"

The Queen must have been very favourably impressed with the *Sacred Dramas*, for she sent Hannah a message through Miss Hamilton, about this time, praising her work and desiring her above all things to pursue the same path, and to go on by writing a sacred drama upon the history of Joseph.

There are several points of interest in Hannah's next home letter. It reminds us that Lord Monboddo is again suing for the hand of Mrs. Garrick; it indicates that an attempt is being made to put the poor lady of the haystack in touch with her supposed German connections, by circulating an account of all that her English friends had been able to find out about her in the German language; and it contains some interesting remarks on

[1] Will Honeycomb's expression.

Mrs. Montagu's change of residence. "When I was in town last week," she writes from Hampton, "we had another last breakfast at St. James's. There I found Lord Monboddo, Mrs. Carter, the pleasantest of the peerage, Lord Stormont, and Count Maréchale, a very agreeable foreign nobleman, and a worthy man; he has almost promised to put the story of our poor insane Louisa into German for me. I was three times with Mrs. Montagu the week I stayed in town. We spent one evening with her and Miss Gregory alone, to take leave of the Hill Street house; and you never saw such an air of ruin and bankruptcy as everything around us wore. We had about three square feet of carpet, and that we might all put our feet upon if we were obliged to sit in a circle in the middle of the room; just as if we were playing at 'hunt the slipper.' . . . She (Mrs. Montagu) is now settled in Portman Square, where, I believe, we were among the first to pay our compliments to her. I had no conception of anything so beautiful. To all the magnificence of a very superb London house, is added the scenery of a country retirement. It is so seldom that anything superb is pleasant, that I was extremely struck with it. I could not help looking with compassion on the amiable proprietor, *shivering at a breeze*, and who can at the best enjoy it so very little a while. She has, however, my ardent wishes for her continuance in a world to which she is an ornament and a blessing." This house is now 22 Portman Square.

We have alluded in a former chapter to Hannah's facility in speaking several modern languages, including Italian. She now writes: "At a party the other day I was placed next General Paoli, and as I have not spoken seven sentences in Italian these seven years, I had not that facility in expressing myself which I used to have. I therefore begged him to carry on this conversation in English."

Mrs. Montagu's new house in Portman Square has had its praises sung by more than one of the literary élite who were so fortunate as to be included among that lady's guests. Mrs. Montagu built the house herself, and employed Adams as her architect. It still stands in its own grounds at the north-west corner of the square. Cipriani and Angelica Kauffman were among the artists who helped to decorate its walls. From the South Sea Islands she had borrowed her idea of having a feather room, for the hangings of which the poultry-yards and aviaries of her friends were made to contribute plumage. The "Queen of the Blue-stockings" was at this time in her sixty-third year, and the energy she threw into the planning and decorations of her new abode, in spite of her delicate health, was truly remarkable. The main object she had in view was to provide herself with a larger and more convenient home in which to entertain the aristocracy of intellect, which she placed far above either that of birth or wealth. From the year 1750, at which time she was, according to Mrs. Delany's autobiography, "handsome, fat, and merry," she had striven to make her house in Hill Street "the central point of union for all the intellect and fashion of the metropolis," and she had always given intellect the precedence. "I never invite idiots to my house," she had written to Garrick in 1770.

Madame Bocage, who was entertained by Mrs. Montagu at Hill Street in 1750, wrote: "We breakfasted in this manner to-day at Lady (Mrs.) Montagu's—in a closet lined with painted paper of Pekin, and furnished with the choicest movables of China. A long table, covered with the finest linen, presented to the view a thousand glittering cups, which contained coffee, chocolate, biscuits, cream, butter, toast, and exquisite tea. . . . The mistress of the house, who deserves to be served at the table of the gods, poured it out herself; this is the custom; and

in order to conform to it, the dress of the English ladies, which suits exactly to their stature, the white apron, and the pretty straw hat, become them with the greatest propriety, not only in their own apartments, but at noon in St. James's Park, where they walk with the stately and majestic gait of nymphs."

Mrs. Montagu has been called "the Madame de Deffand of the English capital." It is remarkable that in an age when card-playing was as much "the rage" as it is at the beginning of the twentieth century, that one lady, without a title, should have been able to maintain herself at the head of the most brilliant gatherings in London for half a century; to practically exclude card-playing, and to depend on intellectual conversation as the sole entertainment provided for her guests. By bringing all the great thinkers and writers thus together in her social gatherings, Mrs. Montagu did unbounded good to the literature of her day. Johnson once remarked to Mrs. Thrale, "She diffuses more knowledge than any woman I know." And yet this wonderful woman found time to write, as well as to act the perfect hostess; besides her Essay on Shakespeare, which did so much to popularise Shakespeare abroad, she contributed three dialogues to Lord Lyttelton's *Dialogues of the Dead*."

In the London season of 1791 Mrs. Montagu entertained the King and Queen in her new home, and it is on record that she feasted seven hundred guests in her "feather room." Upon her lawn, enclosed by a high wall, she was in the habit of entertaining a large gathering of London chimney-sweeps with roast-beef and plum-pudding on the first of May every year.

It is curious, after contemplating Mrs. Montagu's intellectual parties, to turn to Hannah's next home letter, and read her account of one of the ordinary fashionable entertainments of the day. "On Monday I was at a very great assembly at the Bishop of St. Asaph's. Conceive

to yourself one hundred and fifty or two hundred people met together, dressed in the extremity of the fashion; painted as red as bacchanals; poisoning the air with perfumes; treading on each other's gowns; making the crowd they blame; not one in ten able to get a chair; protesting they are engaged to ten other places; and lamenting the fatigue they are not obliged to endure; ten or a dozen card-tables, crammed with dowagers of quality, grave ecclesiastics, and yellow admirals; and you have an idea of an assembly. I never go to these things when I can possibly avoid it, and stay when there as few minutes as I can."

It is still the custom to rail at crowds, but even in our own day there are very few persons who, like Hannah More, really dislike them; in fact, nine ladies out of ten object to attend even a church that is not crowded. I recently heard one lady say to another on the first night of an amateur pantomimic performance, where both were personally acquainted with most of the performers: "I am so sorry to have had to come on the first night; it is so much fuller on the third and fourth nights." To which the other replied: "Yes; I, too, only came to-night from necessity. I see there are quite a number of empty seats behind us."

"I am diverted," Hannah wrote to her people at this time, "with the conjectures which are formed of my principles from the *Dramas*. Some say I am a mystic, because I make Hezekiah talk of the highest of his claims to mercy being founded on indulgence, not reward."

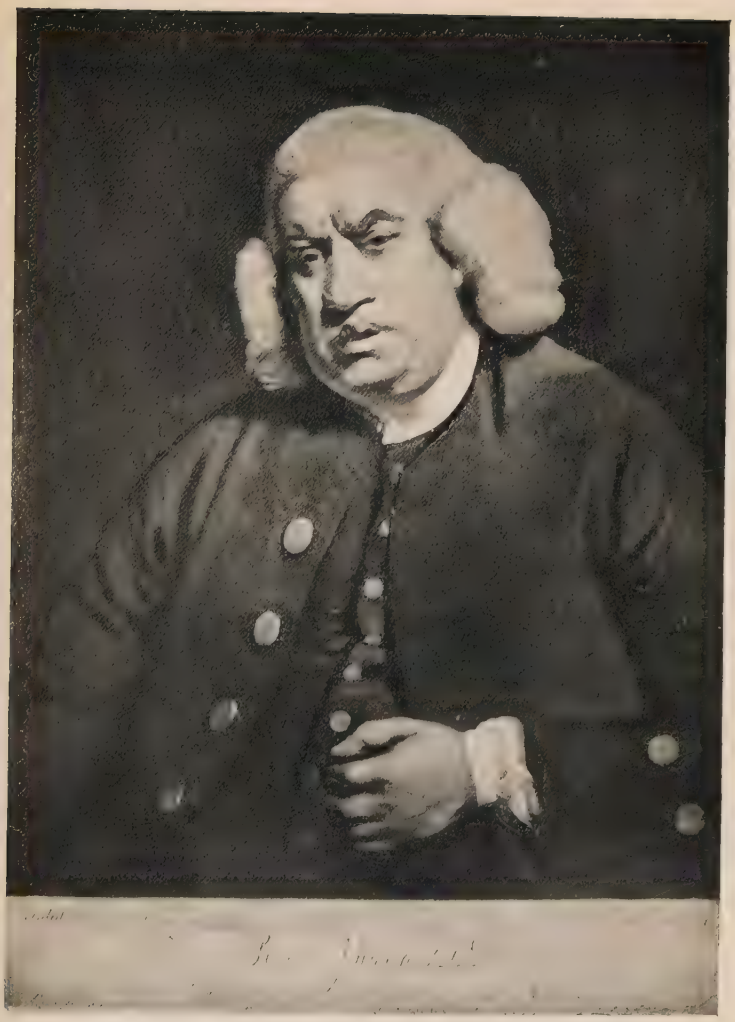
In her next letter, Hannah again refers to the war with America: "On Saturday I dined with the patriots at Bishop Shipley's. You may be sure they were in high spirits at so large a division in the House of Commons. Indeed, I could not help rejoicing with them at any event that bids fair to put an end to this ill-omened war."

CHAPTER XIII

WITH DR. JOHNSON AT OXFORD

It was still the spring of the year 1782 when Hannah wrote to her sisters: "Poor Johnson is in a bad state of health; I fear his constitution is breaking up; I am quite grieved at it; he will not leave an abler defender of religion and virtue behind him; and the following little touch of tenderness which I heard of him last night from one of the Turk's Head Club, endears him to me exceedingly. There are always a great many candidates ready, when any vacancy happens in that club, and it requires no small interest and reputation to get elected; but upon Garrick's death, when numberless applications were made to succeed him, Johnson was deaf to them all; he said, 'No, there never could be found a successor worthy of such a man'; and he insisted upon it that there should be a year's widowhood in the club before they thought of a new election. In Dr. Johnson some contrarieties very harmoniously meet: if he has too little charity for the opinions of others, and too little patience with their faults, he has the greatest tenderness for their persons. He told me the other day he hated to hear people whine about metaphysical distresses, when there was so much want and hunger in the world. I told him I supposed, then, he never wept at any tragedy but *Jane Shore*, who had died for want of a loaf. He called me a saucy girl, but did not deny the inference."

The above extract bears witness not only to the very tender side that Johnson had to his apparently stern nature, but also to the fact that Hannah More, though her



SAMUEL JOHNSON

From a mezzotint by W. Doughty after the portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds, P.R.A.

enemies have accused her of over-flattering him, was not afraid to meet his sententious remarks with candid criticism, and that he took it in very good part.

She next pays a gentle tribute to her old friend Mrs. Delany: "I spent a delightful day with Mrs. Delany. She is eighty-two years old, and blind, yet she is the object of my veneration, and I almost said envy. Such an excellent mind, so cultivated, such a tranquil spirit, such a composed piety! She retains all that tenderness of heart which people are supposed to lose and, generally do lose, in a very advanced age. She told me with some tears that she had no dread of death (besides her extreme unworthiness) but what arose from the thought how terribly her loss would be felt by one or two of her dear friends. Her courage entirely sunk under that idea."

In perusing Hannah More's letters we are struck with the fact that she rarely, if ever, alludes to the personal appearance of her friends and acquaintances. How welcome would a little descriptive touch of the features, the dress, the general appearance of some of these have been; how they would have helped us in retracing the scenes she describes with so much vivacity! How much we should have valued a few words recalling, or rather preserving, the fascinating personality of Mrs. Delany, of the beautiful Mrs. Sheridan—words that we could have treasured in our minds as we studied the portraits which Reynolds and Gainsborough have left us of one of the greatest beauties of her day! A sweeter face than that of old Mrs. Delany there never could have been, but it is only her character that Hannah speaks of. This want in her letters is the more singular when we remember that she was for so many years in and out, as one would say, of the home and studio of the greatest portrait-painter of a century—Sir Joshua Reynolds.

The fact is, Hannah More was so completely absorbed with the minds of the people with whom she came in con-

tact, so wrapped up in the interchange of ideas, that she had little thought to spare for external appearances, which, unless she has cause to censure, she passes over in complete silence. In the period we are now dealing with, reading and conversation were the two strong passions of her soul, next to her wish to do good in the world. "It is a terrible fetter," she writes, "upon the liberty of free-born English conversation to have so many foreigners as this town now abounds with, imposing their language upon us." This remark refers to the many French people then in London, to whom, out of politeness, people were obliged to speak in their own language.

Few think, or have time to think, how a change of government after a general election affects the private concerns of the King of England; yet after all, though the king may be regarded either as a figurehead or as the first servant of the State, he is nevertheless a human being like the rest of us, and has to put up with a good deal whether he may like it or not. In some ways a king enjoys less personal liberty than do the humblest of his subjects. "It has affected me very much," writes Hannah, "to hear of our King's being constrained to part with all his confidential friends, and his own personal servants, in the late general sweep. Out of a hundred stories I will only tell you one, which concerns your old acquaintance Lord Bateman. He went to the king as usual to ask if his Majesty would be pleased to hunt the next day. 'Yes, my lord,' replied the king, 'but I find with great grief that I am not to have the satisfaction of your company.' This was the first intimation he had had of the loss of his place; I really think the contest with France and America might have been settled, though the buck-hounds had retained their old master."

In the same letter there is a most amusing description of a party given by the Bishop of Chester, to which Johnson had been invited. "Johnson was there, and

the bishop was very desirous to draw him out, as he wished to show him off to some of the company who had never seen him. He begged me to sit next him at dinner, and to devote myself to making him talk. To this end I consented to talk more than became me, and our stratagem succeeded. You would have enjoyed seeing him take me by the hand in the middle of dinner, and repeat with no small enthusiasm many passages from *The Fair Penitent*, &c. I urged him to take a *little* wine. He replied, 'I can't drink a little, child, therefore I never touch it; abstinence is as easy to me as temperance would be difficult.' He was very good-humoured and gay. One of the company happened to say a word about poetry. 'Hush, hush,' said he, 'it is dangerous to say a word of poetry before her; it is talking of the art of war before Hannibal.' He continued his jokes, and lamented that I had not married Chatterton, that posterity might have seen a propagation of poets."

This honour paid by Johnson so publicly to Hannah More's poetic talents might have been taken as a piece of playful flattery, did we not find it recorded in the Life of Beattie [1] that he had declared that she was the most powerful versificatrix in the English language, and that "there was no name in poetry that might not be glad to own her."

We now come to Hannah's account of her conversation with Lord Monboddo on an occasion when he breakfasted with Mrs. Garrick and herself at the Adelphi. "The metaphysical and philological Lord Monboddo breakfasted with us yesterday; he is such an extravagant adorer of the ancients, that he scarcely allows the English language to be capable of any excellence, still less the French. . . . He said we moderns were entirely degenerated. I asked in what? 'In everything,' was his answer: 'men are not so tall as they were; women are not so handsome as they were; nobody can now write

[1] See Forbes.

a long period; everything dwindles.' I ventured to say that though long periods were fine in oratory and declamation, yet that such was not the language of passion. He insisted that it was. I defended my opinion by many passages from Shakespeare, among others, those broken bursts of passion in Constance: 'Gone to be married!' 'Gone to swear a truce!' 'False blood with false blood joined.' Again, 'My name is Constance, I am Geoffrey's wife; young Arthur is my son, and he is slain.' We then resumed our quarrel about the slave-trade. He loves slavery upon principle. I asked him how he could vindicate such an enormity. He owned it was because Plutarch justified it. Among much just thinking and some taste, especially in his valuable third volume on the *Origin and Progress of Language*, he entertains some opinions so absurd, that they would hardly be credible if he did not deliver them himself, both in writing and conversation, with a gravity which shows that he is in earnest, but which makes the hearer feel 'to be grave exceeds all power of face.' He is so wedded to system, that, as Lord Barrington said to me the other day, rather than sacrifice his favourite opinion that men were born with tails, he would be contented to wear one himself."

The character that these remarks give to Lord Monboddo quite tallies with that given by Boswell, and we hardly wonder that Mrs. Garrick should have twice rejected so eccentric a suitor to her hand. The remarks that Hannah reports herself to have made on the question of slavery show how strong even at this early date was her feeling upon that question, though she had not yet come under the influence of Wilberforce and his party. Wilberforce was at this time a youth in his twenty-third or twenty-fourth year, and had not yet turned his thoughts to the question that was to dominate his life and give to his name so unique a glory.

Breakfasting at Sir Charles Midleton's a few days

later, Hannah met the captain of one of Commodore Johnson's Dutch prizes. He related to her the following anecdote: "One day he went out of his own ship to dine on board another. While he was there a storm arose which in a short time made an entire wreck of his own ship, to which it was impossible for him to return. He had left on board two little boys, one four, the other five years old, under the care of a poor black servant. The people struggled to get out of the sinking ship into a large boat, and the poor black took his two little children, and having tied them into a bag, and put in a little pot of sweetmeats for them, slung them across his shoulder, and put them into the boat. The boat by this time was quite full; the black was stepping into it himself, but was told by the master there was no room for him, so that either he or the children must perish, for the weight of both would sink the boat. The exalted, heroic negro did not hesitate a moment. 'Very well,' said he. 'Give my duty to my master, and tell him I beg pardon for all my faults.' And then—guess the rest—plunged to the bottom, never to rise again till the sea shall give up her dead. The greatest lady in this land wants me to make an elegy of it, but it is above poetry." Hannah's hostess on this occasion was that Lady Midleton who first inspired Wilberforce with his horror of the slave-trade.

"Did I tell you," continues Hannah, "that I breakfasted at Lord Barrington's? I am now in love with all the four brothers of that noble family. I think the peer as agreeable as any of them, always excepting the bishop, however, whose conversation that morning was, as it always is, instructive and delightful."

At a party at Lord Stormont's the same evening, Hannah saw Lord Pembroke come in laughing, and asked the cause of his merriment; to which he replied that he had met George Selwyn, who found himself very much annoyed with chimney-sweeps. "They were very clamorous; surrounded, daubed, and persecuted him; in short,

would not let him go till they had forced money from him; at length he made them a low bow and cried, 'Gentlemen, I have often heard of the majesty of the people, and I presume your highnesses are in court mourning.'"

In July of this year Dr. Kennicott completed his life work of collating the Hebrew text of the Bible, which had occupied him more than thirty years, and the expenses of which had been defrayed by a public subscription to which several of the crowned heads of Europe had contributed. Dr. Kennicott was, as Addison would have expressed it, a man of no extraction; his father was the barber and parish clerk of a small village in Devonshire. Having no influence to aid him, he had met with much opposition as a young man; the Bodleian Library had twice refused him the use of its manuscripts, but his patient perseverance had at length overcome all difficulties, and long before his work was finished he had won the esteem and friendship of all whose esteem and friendship were worth having. Mrs. Kennicott wrote to tell Hannah of the little jubilee they had held at the conclusion of her husband's labours; in the same letter she referred to some remarks in Hannah's letter to her. "I would not have you for the future make yourself so sure of my not exposing such of your opinions as you are pleased to say many of your correspondents would call *methodistical;* a bugbear word, very ingeniously introduced to frighten people from expressing their sentiments, which they ought both to cherish and avow. You will, I hope, always find yourself greatly superior to such fears; for I consider those persons as having the happy power of doing the most essential service to the cause of religion, who, with taste to enjoy all the pleasures of this world, ever appear to hold it in due subordination to the next; and who, with talent to admire the wit of profane learning, manifest upon all proper occasions that sacred studies form their chief delight."

Mrs. Kennicott had been a Miss Chamberlayne, and was sister to Lord Rockingham's secretary, a man noted as one of the politest scholars of his age. He met his death by jumping in a fit of frenzy from the Treasury window in April 1782.

In her letter above quoted, Mrs. Kennicott adds: "I long to see all the fine things you have made. How unequally are talents distributed in this world! That you should be able to write such verses, knit such stockings, and make such aprons!"

On her way to Bristol a few weeks later Hannah paid a visit to the Kennicotts at Oxford, and on June 13th she wrote to her sisters: "Who do you think is my principal cicerone at Oxford? Only Dr. Johnson! and we do so gallant it about! You cannot imagine with what delight he showed me every part of his own college (Pembroke). Dr. Adams, the master of Pembroke, had contrived a very pretty piece of gallantry. We spent the day and evening at his house. After dinner, Johnson begged to conduct me to see the college; he would let no one show it me but himself. 'This was my room; this Shenstone's.' Then, after pointing out all the rooms of the poets who had been of his college, 'In short,' said he, 'we were a nest of singing-birds. Here we walked, there we played cricket.' He ran over with pleasure the history of the juvenile days he passed there. When he came into the common room, we spied a fine large print of Johnson, framed and hung up that very morning, with this motto—

'And is not Johnson ours, himself a host?'

Under which stared you in the face, 'From Miss More's *Sensibility*.' This little incident amused us; but, alas! Johnson looks very ill, and, indeed, spiritless and wan. However, he made an effort to be cheerful, and I exerted myself much to make him so."

In her next letter we read: "We are just setting off

to spend a day or two at the Bishop of Llandaff's, near Wallingford. But first I must tell you I am engaged to dine on my return with the learned Dr. Edwards of Jesus College, to meet Dr. Johnson, Thomas Barton, and whatever else is most learned and famous in this university."

A few months before this visit to Oxford the Academy of Arts, Science, and *Belles Lettres* at Rouen had done Hannah More the honour of electing her as one of their members. She kept up an occasional correspondence with that academy for many years. She received a letter from the academicians of Rouen while she was at Oxford, in which they asked her to let them have a sketch of her life. In a letter to her sisters she refers to the request as follows: "So I am to send them the history of my life! I think I had better cut it out of the *European Magazine*, or get Mrs. —— to write it; in her hands all my sins will make a flaming figure."

In December of this year (1782) Hannah was again with Mrs. Garrick at Hampton, whence she wrote to her sisters: "Never was such delicious weather! I passed two hours in the garden the other day as if it had been April, with my friend Mr. Brown (Capability Brown). I took a very agreeable lecture from him in his art, and he promised to give me taste by inoculation. He illustrates everything he says about gardening by some literary or grammatical allusion. He told me he compared his art to literary composition. 'Now *there*,' said he, pointing his finger, 'I make a comma, and there,' pointing to another spot, 'where a more decided turn is proper, I make a colon; at another part, where an interruption is desirable to break the view, a parenthesis; now a full stop, and then I begin another subject.'"

Mrs. Montagu had visited the Misses More at Bristol this autumn on her way to Bath, and on her arrival she wrote to Hannah: "I cannot express to you the delight I enjoyed the day I spent with you all at Bristol. I have

talked of nothing else; and I had this morning a letter from Mrs. Carter from Deal, congratulating me upon it, for I wrote her an account of it. . . . I am of your opinion that idleness is criminal in men of parts; but there are certain desultory geniuses which, like the bird of paradise, are destined to flutter in every region, and abide in none. They are pretty birds, to be sure, but not so useful as the barn-door fowl, who get their food in the farm-yard and leave an egg every day in return; the others only drop in now and then a fine feather from their glittering wing and plumy crest, which perhaps are picked up by the sedulous collector, and adorn his fancy-works." (She was probably thinking of her own feather room.)

Early in January Hannah received a letter from her sister Sally telling her of her father's death, at the age of eighty-three; we have part of her reply written on the ninth: "It was so unusual for me to receive a letter two days following, that when Sally's came on Wednesday I had so strong a presentiment of its contents that I did not open it for a long time; but laid it down very deliberately, and went and did several things which I thought too well I should not be able to do after I had read it. Yet, notwithstanding all the preparation, I was just as much shocked at reading it as if I had expected nothing like it. I could not get quite through it for many hours after; and yet there is no cause for grief, but much for joy, much cause to be thankful. And I am very thankful that he was spared to us for so long; that he was removed when life began to grow a burthen to himself; that he did not survive his faculties; that he was not confined to the miseries of a sick-bed; above all, that his life was so exemplary, and his death so easy. I wished I had seen him. Yet that is a vain regret. I hope he did not inquire after me or miss me. Mrs. Garrick was very much affected, as my father was a very great favourite of hers."

And on January 28th, three weeks later, she wrote: "Since my father's death, I have never had resolution to go out of doors, so much as to walk round the garden, in almost three weeks; but as the day is fine, I intend to go out when I have finished this scrawl."

Mrs. Garrick and Hannah appear to have lived very quietly at Hampton for the next three months, and none of Hannah's letters during that time have been preserved, but in March she wrote to her sisters: "I thought the peace (with America) was to put an end to all divisions and disturbances, but I think I never knew this town in such a state of anarchy and distraction. The disputes are not about peace and war, but who shall have power and place, both of which are lost as soon as obtained. Before you can pay your congratulations to your friends on their promotion, presto pass! they are out again. Lord Falmouth told me he sat down with a most eager appetite to his soup and roast at eight in the morning, and several of the lords had company to dinner at that hour after the house broke up."

In a letter dated March 7th, Hannah tells her sisters that she has refused to go with Lady Midleton and Mrs. Porteus to hear Mrs. Siddons in *Percy*, and she adds: "You know I have long withdrawn myself from the theatre."

In this letter Hannah also tells her sisters that she has mentioned to Lady Spencer her idea of having a print prepared of the Maid of the Haystack, and that she had replied with approval of the suggestion as likely to be of service by keeping up people's attention.

There is a remarkable story in her next letter. "Did you hear," she writes, "of a woman of quality, an earl's daughter, perishing for want the other day near Cavendish Square? The sad story is, that she had married an attorney, a bad man, and had several children; they all frequently experienced the want of a morsel of bread. Lady Jane grew extremely ill, and faint with hunger.

An old nurse, who had never forsaken her mistress in her misfortunes, procured by some means a sixpence; Lady Jane sent her out to buy a cow-heel; the nurse brought it in and carried a piece of it to her mistress. 'No,' said she, 'I feel myself dying; all relief is too late, and it would be cruel in me to rob the children of a morsel by wasting it on one who must die.' So saying, she expired. I leave you to make your own comments on this domestic tragedy, in a metropolis drowned in luxury. What will Sally say to side dishes and third courses now?"

Hannah goes on to tell how she has spent an afternoon with Mrs. Delany and the Duchess of Portland, and she adds: "I think that charming Duchess very much broken in her looks; and she is not likely to be cured by her son's being appointed premier to this distracted country. His ministry, I suppose, will be still shorter than his vice-royalty was. These labours and vicissitudes are the blessings of greatness. Even riches do not make rich. I should be glad to know what our friend Dr. Stonehouse would think of such new-fashioned doctrines as I have lately heard in a charity sermon on a Sunday, from a dignified ecclesiastic, and a popular one, too, but I will not tell his name. He told the rich and great that they ought to be extremely liberal in their charities, because they were happily exempted from the severer virtues. How do you like such sentiment from a Christian teacher? What do you think Polycarp or Ignatius would say to it?"

On March 29th Hannah gives an account of an evening spent with Lady Charlotte Wentworth: "She had a very select little party, and made me read to them—poetry too! I defended myself as well as I could, but to my great regret was forced to comply."

"I thought Mrs. Garrick would have dropped with laughing," she adds, "when I read in Sally's letter that you spent all your leisure in teaching the *governesses* to

read and spell. It struck her fancy mightily. . . . I passed the whole evening at the Bishop of St. Asaph's in a very pleasant wrangle with Mr. Walpole about poets: he abusing all my favourites, and I all his; he reprobating Akenside, Thomson, and all my bards of the blank song; and I all his odes and lyrics. I told him (rather lightly, I fear) that David had expressed my notion of the obscurity of lyric poetry when he said, 'I will utter my dark speech upon the harp.'"

Johnson dined with Mrs. Garrick and Hannah at the Adelphi during the first week of May, and on the fifth of that month Hannah wrote: "Poor Johnson exerted himself exceedingly; but he was very ill, and looked so dreadfully that it quite grieved me. He is more mild and complacent than he used to be. His sickness seems to have softened his mind without having at all weakened it. I was struck with the mild radiancy of this setting sun."

CHAPTER XIV

CONVERSATION

Before leaving London Hannah dined with her friend Mrs. Boscawen in Dudley Street, to celebrate the birthday of that lady's grandson, Viscount Falmouth, who had now reached his twenty-fifth year: "His mother told him," Hannah writes, "that she wanted to have him married, and advised him to fall in love; he said he should if he were with any young ladies in the country, but that he never could in London, for the women did not stand still long enough for a man to fall in love with them."

On May 22nd she writes: "I have finished my campaign in town; we do not now appear to anybody, unless we meet them strolling in the streets. We dined one day last week at Mrs. Bannister's to meet the Bishop of Winchester and Mrs. North; there was a great deal of other company, among whom was Mr. Swinburne, the author of *Travels to Spain, Sicily*, &c. One is always surprised to find the author of two or three big burly quartos a little genteel young man. He is modest and agreeable, not wise and heavy, like his books."

In the same letter she says: "A visitor has just gone away quite chagrined that I am such a rigid Methodist, that I cannot come to her assembly on Sunday, though she protests with great piety that she never has cards, and that it is quite savage in me to think there can be any harm in a little agreeable music."

On May 29th, after Mrs. Garrick and Hannah had been settled for a week at Hampton, the latter wrote to her sisters: "Before I left London, I spent a whole morning with Mrs. Delany. She gave me a great treat—

the reading of all Dean Swift's letters, written to herself. . . . I am tired of writing several letters, and of reading the *Lives of the Reformers*, and of trimming a fine gauze handkerchief; and now I am going to close the day with a thick quarto of Dr. Beattie's metaphysics."

A few days later she again writes to her sister: "I believe I forgot to mention Mrs. Vesey's pleasant Tuesday parties to you. It is a select society which meets at her house every other Tuesday, and of which I was invited to be an unworthy member. It assembles on the day on which the members of the Turk's Head Club dine together. In the evening they all meet at Mrs. Vesey's, with the addition of such other company as it is difficult to find elsewhere. Last Tuesday we met, and Mr. Langton and Mr. Walpole were added to the society for the first time this winter. I rejoiced to find them again, for they are two of the very pleasantest men 'that e'er my conversation coped withal.' The latter told me a hundred pleasant stories of his father (Sir Robert Walpole) and the then court. . . . We dined the other day at Strawberry Hill, and passed as delightful a day as elegant literature, high breeding and lively wit can afford. As I was the greatest stranger, Mr. Walpole devoted himself to my amusement with great politeness, but I have so little of *virtu* and antiquarianism about me that I really felt myself quite unworthy of all the trouble he took for me."

Very soon after her return to Bristol in June, Hannah hurried to Christ Church College, Oxford, at the earnest wish of her friend Mrs. Kennicott, whose husband was very ill and not likely to live many days. Dr. Kennicott lingered on till the 18th August. Hannah wrote to her sisters on the 19th: "Dear Dr. Kennicott expired yesterday about four o'clock in the afternoon, I saw him breathe his last. The servants, though there were six of them, were afraid to stay in the room without me. I got her away from him downstairs, and for the last

two hours ran continually up and down, from the afflicted wife to the expiring husband, she all the time knowing he was in the last agonies. Yet, when I came to break it to her she bore it with the utmost fortitude. . . . The Dean of Christchurch has just been to say that in a a quarter of an hour the great bell will toll. I have told her of it, and she is now looking out a book for me to read during that time."

Hannah attended the funeral and saw the remains of the great Hebrew scholar laid beside those of Bishop Berkeley; she then wrote to her people: "I shall stay while I have any chance of being useful to the afflicted widow. Thus closed a life, the last thirty years of which were honourably spent in collating the Hebrew Scriptures. . . . What substantial comfort and satisfaction must not the testimony which our departed friend was enabled to bear to the truth of the Holy Scriptures, afford to those who lean upon them as the only anchor of the soul. When Dr. Kennicott had an audience of the king to present his work, his majesty asked him, what, upon the whole, had been the result of his laborious and learned investigation. To which he replied, that he found some grammatical errors and many variations in the different texts, but not one which, in the smallest degree, affected any article of faith or practice."

As soon as she found herself alone after the funeral, Hannah seized her pen and wrote for her sisters' benefit a short sketch of Dr. Kennicott's character. For want of space we cannot insert it here, but we will quote the lines referring to his affection for his wife: "He had a just sense of his literary talents, but he was vain only of his wife; she was the object, not only of his affection, but his pride; and he loved her as much from taste as tenderness. She was to him hands and feet, and eyes and ears and intellect. If any ingenious thing was said in company, he never perfectly relished it till she related it to him. . . . There are certain ladies, who, merely

from being faithful or frugal, are reckoned excellent wives, and who, indeed, make a man everything but happy. . . . Lest their account of merit should run too high, they allow themselves to be unpleasant in proportion as they are useful; not considering that it is almost the worst sort of domestic immorality to be disagreeable," and she winds up with a reference to the fact that Mrs. Kennicott had learned Hebrew, merely that she might be able to correct her husband's proofs.

Hannah More had herself no occasion to show the world the kind of wife that she was capable of making, but she has left behind her no more unmistakable proofs of the value of her friendship than the facts that two such women as Mrs. Garrick and Mrs. Kennicott should each have turned first to her in the moment of their life's greatest sorrow, for support and comfort.

After her return to Bristol, the strain she had undergone, in undertaking " one of the most generous but most painful acts of friendship," told upon Hannah, and for a short time she was herself an invalid. During her convalescence she amused herself with writing a poem, which occupied nineteen pages of manuscript, and was destined to " divert our dear Mrs. Vesey in her banishment from London." When completed, she divided the manuscript into two parts in such a manner that neither made sense without the other; these she sent through two friends separately to Mrs. Vesey, with the intention that one should arrive before the other and torment her friend with curiosity as to who had written it and what it was about. Mr. Pepys was the recipient of one half of the manuscript.

It happened that both the friends were in town at the time, so the poem was at once put together and read to Mrs. Vesey. Mr. Pepys wrote to Hannah in a letter dated 29th July that he liked it exceedingly. " I am at a loss to point out what I like best in it," he added, " as it is so full of the best-humoured wit and most elegant

compliment; but what made the greatest impression on my fancy was that admirable turn of giving Mrs. Vesey the preference to any philosopher who should *square the circle*."

Hannah in her reply begs Mr. Pepys not to give copies of the poem to any one but Mrs. Montagu and Mrs. Walsingham, "with strict injunctions to them not to give them away. I have a terror of newspapers, from which I have found, by sad experience, that no mediocrity can secure one."

To this Mr. Pepys replied that he did not care a fig for her restrictions, "though I certainly shall not transgress them without your leave." On 1st September he wrote from Tonbridge Wells: "I have had the greatest success in disseminating your fame among some other good judges, at this place, to whom I have read the *Bas Bleu* with uncommon effect; and every creature, whose opinion was worth having, has agreed with me in thinking it a performance of very extraordinary merit."

In a subsequent letter dated 10th October, from the same place, Mr. Pepys wrote: "Exclusively of the pleasure I have received from the *Bas Bleu*, you cannot imagine the degree of consequence it has given me with some very agreeable people here, and how much I have risen in their estimation by telling them that *I* was the first person who saw it, and that *I* would read it to them, but that no copy of it could be possibly given."

Mrs. Vesey, to whom Hannah More addressed her poem, *The Bas Bleu; or, Conversation*, was one of the most prominent leaders of the Blue-stockings for nearly half a century; she was the second daughter of Sir Thomas Vesey, Bishop of Ossory, and had married twice, her second husband being Agmondesham Vesey, Esq., a member of the Irish Parliament. Mrs. Vesey divided her time between her home at Lucan, near Dublin, and her London residence in Clarges Street, where she held the gatherings described by Hannah More at the beginning

of this chapter. She was immensely popular in London society, and it has been said of her that she sought to see everything and everybody. She has been especially praised for her remarkable power of at once putting all her guests at their ease, a power which always marks the ideal hostess. Elizabeth Carter's nephew and biographer, Montagu Pennington, who as a young man was often present at Mrs. Vesey's later gatherings, has left us an interesting description of the way in which they were conducted. He speaks of them as frequent evening meetings, without form or ceremony, and consisting of persons of both sexes distinguished either for learning or genius. "To these parties," he says, "it was not difficult for any person of character to be introduced. There was no ceremony, no cards, and no supper. Even dress was so little regarded that a foreign gentleman, who was to go there with an acquaintance, was told in jest, that dress was so unimportant that he might appear there if he pleased in blue stockings. This he understood in the literal sense, and when he spoke of it in French he called it the *Bas Bleu* meeting. And this was the real origin of the ludicrous appellation of the Blue-stocking Club, since given to these meetings and so much talked of." This writer goes on to assure his readers that the other account of the origin of the name of Blue-stocking, given by Forbes in his Life of Beattie, is quite erroneous, namely, that it was derived from Mr. Benjamin Stillingfleet, a learned and well-known naturalist, who wore stockings of that hue. Stillingfleet died in December 1771, long before the gatherings had acquired the appellation. Montagu Pennington also points out in support of his assertion, that Hannah More's poem on the subject was not published till 1786, and that her explanation given in the preface as to the origin of the name entirely coincided with that given by Elizabeth Carter.

"Nothing could be more agreeable, nor indeed more instructive," writes Pennington, "than these parties. Mrs. Vesey had the most magic art of putting all her company at their ease, without the least appearance of design. Hers was no formal circle to petrify an unfortunate stranger on his entrance, no rules of conversation to observe; no holding forth of one to his own distress, and to the stupefying of his audience; no reading of his works by the author. The company naturally broke into little groups, perpetually varying and changing. They talked, or were silent, sat or walked about, just as they pleased. Nor was it absolutely necessary even to talk sense. Here was no bar to harmless mirth and gaiety. . . . Here were to be met with occasionally most of the persons of note or eminence in different ways, who were in London either for the whole or part of the winter—bishops, wits, noblemen and authors, politicians and scholars."

If Mrs. Montagu was the Queen of the Blues, Mrs. Vesey came very near her in rank, and indeed accomplished even more, for her success was gained without the help of the luxury, the magnificence, and the appeals to the stomach which certainly aided Mrs. Montagu very considerably. . . . Perhaps this was Hannah More's opinion, and the reason why she chose to address her poem to Mrs. Vesey rather than to Mrs. Montagu. Her poem commences thus :—

"Vesey! of verse the judge and friend!
Awhile my idle strain attend:
Not with the days of early Greece,
I mean to ope my slender piece;
The rare Symposium to proclaim
Which crowned the Athenians' social name;
Or how Aspasia's parties shone,
The first *Bas Bleu* at Athens known;
Where Socrates unbending sat,
With Alcibiades in chat

We pass over the verses alluding to Roman days and come to the main theme:—

"Long was society o'er-run
By whist, that desolating Hun;
Long did quadrille despotic sit,
That Vandal of colloquial wit;
And conversation's setting light
Lay half obscured in Gothic night;
At length the mental shades decline,
Colloquial wit begins to shine;
Genius prevails, and conversation
Emerges into reformation.
The vanquished triple crown to you,
Boscawen sage, bright Montagu,
Divided, fell;" . . .

Then follow some satirical lines on the ordinary assemblies of the day, and the toil that these so-called pleasures involved; after which come the lines so much admired by Mr. W. Pepys:—

"Small were that art which would ensure
The circle's boasted quadrature!
See Vesey's plastic genius make
A circle every figure take;
Nay, shapes and forms, which would defy
All science of Geometry;" . . .

And then:—

"Ask you what charms this gift dispense?
'Tis the strong spell of common-sense
Away dull ceremony flew
And with her bore distraction too."

As for the class of guests thus entertained:—

"Here sober duchesses are seen,
Chaste wits, and critics void of spleen;
Physicians, fraught with real science
And Whigs and Tories in alliance;
Poets, fulfilling Christian duties,
Just lawyers, reasonable beauties;
Bishops who preach, and peers who pay,
And countesses who seldom play;
Learn'd antiquaries, who, from college,
Reject the rust, and bring the knowledge;

And, hear it, age, believe it, youth,—
Polemics, really seeking truth ;
And travellers, of that rare tribe,
Who've seen the countries they describe."

Her lines on the true end and aim of conversation are very good :—

"Yet not from low desire to shine
Does genius toil in learning's mine ;
Not to indulge in idle vision,
But strike new light by strong collision.
Of conversation, wisdom's friend,
This is the object and the end."

And :—

"O'er books the mind inactive lies,
Books, the mind's food, not exercise !
Her vigorous wing she scarcely feels
Till use the latent strength reveals ;
Her slumbering energies called forth,
She rises, conscious of her worth.
And, at her new-found powers elated,
Thinks them not roused, but new created."

And finally :—

"When correspondent tastes impart
Communion sweet, from heart to heart ;
You ne'er the cold gradations need
Which vulgar souls to union lead :

"Each in the other joys to find
The image answering to his mind.
But sparks electric only strike
On souls electrical alike.
The flash of intellect expires,
Unless it meet congenial fires."

It has been said that the most brilliant of English eighteenth-century intellectual gatherings were but a faint echo of the brilliant *salons* of the *Hotel de Rambouillet*, to which there is an allusion in this poem ; but it is clear that the atmosphere of the English assemblies was the purer morally, and the more refined of the two. The

Earl of Mansfield of that day told Hannah More, that when he was Ambassador at Paris he was assured that it was a common thing for those persons of a purer taste who frequented the French assemblies to come out of them so wearied with the wit and laboured ingenuity of the guests that they used to express the comfort they felt in their emancipation by exclaiming, "*Allons faisons des solecisms.*"

The *Bas Bleu* concludes with an inquiry into the secret of the charm an ideal hostess wields over her guests, the magic something with which she banishes envy from the breast of the less distinguished, the charm by which the more brilliant members win not only the approbation but the love of the listening crowd. This great gift is, we are told,—attention, or as we might express it, an attentive deference to each in turn.

"Thy silent flattery soothes our spirit,
And we forgive eclipsing merit;
Our jealous souls no longer burn,
Nor hate thee, though thou shine in turn;
The sweet atonement screens the fault,
And love and praise are cheaply bought.
With mild complacency to hear,
Though somewhat long the tale appear,—
The dull relation to attend,
Which mars the story you could mend;
'Tis more than wit, the moral beauty,
'Tis pleasure rising out of duty.
Nor vainly think, the time you waste,
When pleasure triumphs over taste."

Neither before nor since the days of those real old Blue-stockings has England seen anything like those wonderful conversation parties of the eighteenth century. Addison even in his day complained that, at gatherings of the learned, literary guests were arranged in the drawing-room exactly as their books were arranged upon the shelves of a library, and certainly we see much the same arrangement in our own twentieth century. The poet Cowper, who was a sincere admirer of Mrs.

Montagu, and who thoroughly appreciated the good she did by drawing together the intellect of her day, says, in his poem on *Conversation* :—

> "True bliss, if man may reach it, is composed
> Of hearts in union mutually disclosed."

"One of the greatest pleasures in life," says Addison, "is conversation . . . the pleasures of conversation are enhanced by every increase of knowledge. Education gives fecundity of thought, copiousness of illustration, quickness, vigour, fancy, words, and gives the power of trifling without being undignified or absurd."

I think we may repeat without exaggeration that no really brilliant conversationalist has ever been a card-player. The two appear to be incompatible. Horace Walpole, whose conversational powers are often noticed by Hannah More in her letters, hated cards, yet a kindly spirit made him give many an evening to the card-table to amuse his old blind friend, Lord Montrose. Elizabeth Carter, too, was always ready for a game of whist with her old lady friends at Deal, with whom intellectual conversation was utterly out of the question. Such cases of self-sacrifice may be frequent enough, but a Horace Walpole or an Elizabeth Carter playing cards for their own pleasure would be a rarity indeed.

Coventry Patmore, writing on the subject of conversation in the end of the nineteenth century, says that the best use of intercourse, whether personal or through books, with the minds of others, is not so much to acquire their thoughts, feelings and characters, as to give fresh consciousness, form and power to our own proper and peculiar selves. "Such intercourse not only brings latent distinction into life, but it increases it more and more. The best use of the supremely useful intercourse of man and woman is not the begetting of children, but the increase of contrasted personal consciousness."

Here we have Hannah More's description of the

kind of party she did not care for, but at which she found herself a guest in March 1784. "I saw the Lady Windsors the other night at a great assembly," she writes, "at Lady Rothes, which was so hot, so crowded, and so fine, that I never passed a more dull or unpleasant evening. I am absolutely resolved I will go to such parties no more. How I grudged the waste of time, to pass an evening squeezed to death among a parcel of fine idle people, many of whom care as little for me as I do for them; and where it was impossible to have anything worthy of being called conversation. It was not only vanity, but vexation of spirit; but one is drawn by the assurance of a very small party."

In the same letter she adds: "As politics spoil all conversation, Mr. Walpole, the other night, proposed that everybody should forfeit half-a-crown who said anything tending to introduce the idea of ministers or opposition. I added, that whoever even mentioned pit-coal, or a fox-skin muff, should be considered as guilty; and it was accordingly voted."

What a strange thing it seems that the nickname of "blue-stocking," given in sheer fun to some of the most charming women of the day in the eighteenth century, should, in the second half of the nineteenth, be used as an epithet of derision and contempt, and come to be dreaded by young girls like small-pox; an epithet which conjures up immediately the apparition of an ugly old-fashioned-spectacled-old-maidish-heavy-pedantic young lady, whom every young man worth catching would flee from as from a plague.

There was a time in the nineteenth century when every girl who showed the slightest interest in the pleasures of the mind, above and beyond what her governess had demanded of her, ran the risk of attracting to herself this odious name. And what is more, there were hundreds of cases where the girl, rather than run so awful a risk, actually forced herself to transfer her thoughts from the

pleasures of intellect to those of dress and the most frivolous of amusements.

The history of woman's development will be a strange one when it comes to be written; we shall be astonished to see how many steps backward she has taken for every step forward.

In the first decade of the nineteenth century Sydney Smith wrote: "It is not easy to imagine that there can be any just cause why a woman of forty should be more ignorant than a boy of twelve years of age." Yet in the twentieth century there are still thousands of ladies of the middle classes in England whose education is more deficient than that of a young schoolboy. Uneducated men may escape intellectual degradation: the artisan may learn caution, accuracy, judgment, from his daily employment, but the uneducated lady of leisure cannot escape intellectual degradation. Why, indeed, should women be deterred from intellectual study by the dread of being thought pedantic if men are not deterred by it—the word is not peculiar to the female sex.

Without thoughtful reading and intellectual study the mind is not in a fit state to exercise itself in conversation, and we should not overlook the fact that one great secret of the brilliant success of Mrs. Vesey's parties lay in the fact that she exercised a careful selection in choosing her guests; like Mrs. Montagu, she took care to invite no idiots to her conversation parties. Dividing a circle of ladies and gentlemen into small groups would not in itself produce interesting conversation, as many a twentieth-century hostess has found to her cost. The groups themselves must consist of minds well fed and eager for exercise, not what Lewis Carroll has wittily designated as "fat minds," short of breath and incapable of taking the smallest intellectual fence, or of lean minds that are suffering from want of proper nourishment. The good that this meeting together of healthy minds is capable of doing is simply boundless. Addison went

so far as to assert that the undying fame enjoyed by the great Latin poets and prose writers is due in no small measure to their having come constantly into contact with one another in their own day and learned to appreciate each other's genius reciprocally. And may we not say the same with truth of our own groups of literary genius in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries?

Another point to be observed is that neither Mrs. Vesey nor Mrs. Montagu, nor any other of the Bluestocking hostesses, was lacking in that quality so essential in a hostess—discriminating tact. None of these ladies caused friction or made enemies by openly showing a preference for a high titled or a brilliantly intellectual friend, and hurting the feelings of a dull or comparatively insignificant one. They had their dull parties and assemblies of dull people, like everybody else, but on different days. Selection does not necessarily involve exclusion. Mrs. Montagu had even her day for chimney-sweeps.

CHAPTER XV

THE POETICAL MILKWOMAN

In March of this year Hannah More was invited by Lady Spencer to spend a week with her at Holywell House, St. Albans, and while there she wrote to her sisters: "I have been out ever since breakfast, exploring the environs of this old town, and tracing the remains of the ancient city of Verulam. There is little of the Roman remains to see, but there is a great deal to imagine, and that is full as well, or perhaps better; but what has delighted me much more, was to see a statue cut out of one piece of marble, of the wisest, brightest (I will not add Pope's other epithet) of mankind; you will know that I mean the great prophet of science, my Lord Bacon. I was also vastly pleased with seeing his noble old house, and gallery full of delightful original pictures of Elizabeth's court. The venerable mansion is, alas! about to be pulled down. Holywell House, where I now am, is going to be repaired. It is at present a very cold one, though my lady has just told me there are twenty fires in it. It was built by Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, whose beautiful form is looking down upon me as I write. By this picture she must have been a most lovely woman. Lady Spencer is very composed and cheerful, lives with great regularity, and abounds in charitable actions. She has a constant succession of friends in her house. There is no form or ceremony of any kind, as you will believe when I tell you that I have not changed my dress till to-day, though we have had many noble visitors."

Charlotte Yonge must have overlooked the letter from which the above is taken when she remarked that

Hannah More betrayed in her letters an entire lack of interest in antiquities. During this visit Hannah and another lady who was staying with Lady Spencer rode twenty miles into the country to attend a sale of old books. They amused themselves with bidding for lots for other people without knowing what they contained, and brought home a hundred little ragged old books for Lady Spencer.

It was also during this visit that Hannah knitted a pair of socks for one of Mr. Pepys's children, and sent them to Mrs. (afterwards Lady) Pepys, with a very amusing letter on *The Bas Blanc*—a literary description of her handiwork, which might be taken for a description of a poem as well as of a sock. In fact, one reader of it was at first quite under the impression that it referred to a poem, and actually hunted through three volumes of Hannah More's works to find it!

It is headed *The Bas Blanc*, and is as follows:—

"DEAR MADAM,—I beg leave to dedicate the enclosed work, the fruit of a few days' leisure at St. Albans, to either of your little children, of whose capacity of receiving it you will be the best judge upon trial, for there is a certain fitness without which the best works are of little value. Though it is so far of a moral cast, that its chief end is utility, yet I hope that the child will be able to run through it with pleasure. I may say, without vanity, that it is formed upon the precepts of the great masters of the *Epopœia*, with but few exceptions. The subject is simple, but it has a beginning, middle, and end. The exordium is the natural introduction, by which you are let into the whole work. The middle, I trust, is free from any unnatural tumour or inflation, and the end from any disproportionate littleness. I have avoided bringing about the catastrophe too suddenly, as I knew that would hurt him at whose feet I lay it. For the same reason, I took care to shun too pointed a con-

clusion, still reserving my greatest acuteness for this part of my subject. I had materials for a much longer work, but the art to stop has always appeared to me to be no less the great secret of a poet, than the art to blot; and whoever peruses this work will see that I could not have added another line, without such an unravelling, as would have greatly perplexed the conclusion. My chief care has been to unite the two first essentials of composition, ease and strength. I do not pretend to have paid any great attention to the passions, and yet I hope my work will not be found deficient, either in warmth or softness; but these will be better felt than expressed. Now and then, partly from negligence, and partly from tenuity, I have broken the thread of my narration, but have pieced it so happily, that none but the eye of a professor, which looks into the interior, will detect it; and the initiated are generally candid, because they are in the secret. What little ornament there is, I have bestowed, not injudiciously, I trow, on the slenderest part. You will find but one episode, and even that does not obstruct the progress of the main subject; and for parallels I will be bold to say Plutarch does not furnish one so perfect. The rare felicity of this species of composition is the bold attempt to unite poetry with mechanics, for which, see the clockwork in the third section. As all innovation is a proof of false taste, or a fantastic vanity, I was contented to use the old machinery in working up this piece. I have taken care not to overlay the severe simplicity of the ancients (my great precursors in this walk) with any finery of my own invention; and like other moderns, you will find I have failed only in proportion as I have neglected my model. After all, I wish the work may not be thought too long; but of this he to whose use it is dedicated will be the best judge; his feelings must determine, and that is a decision from which lies no appeal; for in this case, as in most others, *le tact* is a surer standard than rules. I beg your

pardon for so tedious a preface to so slight a performance ; but the subject has been near my heart so often as I have had the work in hand ; and as I suspect it will long survive all my other productions, I am desirous to deposit it in the Pepys collections ; humbly hoping, that though neither defaced nor mutilated, it may be found as useful as many a black-letter manuscript of more recondite learning.—I am, my dear Madam,

"L'Amie des Enfans."

In April there was another general election, and while being carried in her chair from the Adelphi to Lincoln's Inn Fields, to spend the evening with a friend, Hannah got into the thick of an election fight. Her chairmen were about to carry her through Covent Garden, when several persons who were passing warned them not to enter the garden, as there were a hundred armed men who, suspecting every chairman belonged to Brookes's, would fall upon them. "In spite of my entreaties," she writes, to her sisters, "the men would have persisted ; but a stranger, out of humanity, made them set me down, and the shrieks of the wounded, for there was a terrible battle, intimidated the chairmen, who at last were prevailed upon to carry me another way. A vast number of people followed me, crying out, 'It is Mrs. Fox ; none but Mr. Fox's wife would dare to come into Covent Garden in a chair : she is going to canvas in the dark.' Though not a little frightened, I laughed heartily at this, but shall stir no more in a chair for some time. Mrs. Garrick is so interested in Pitt, that we send the man every day to wait the close of the poll, and to bring us the numbers. I do not believe she could eat her dinner without knowing how matters go. I, too, try to be interested, and sometimes really do act solicitude very well ; but unluckily for my principles, I met Fox canvassing the other day, and he looked so sensible and agreeable that, if I had not turned my eyes

another way, I believe it would have been all over with me."

She tells her sisters that she has got a new admirer in old General Oglethorpe, and that they flirt together prodigiously. "He is, perhaps the most remarkable man of his time," she adds. "He was foster-brother to the Pretender, and is much above ninety years old; the finest figure you ever saw; he perfectly realises all my ideas of Nestor. . . . He is one of the few persons living who were mentioned by Pope; Lord Mansfield and Lord Marchmont are the other two."

In her next letter she tells an anecdote which she has heard direct from the Court, through her friend Miss Hamilton. Hutton, the Moravian, had occasionally the honour of being invited to the royal breakfast-table, and on one of these occasions the King said to him, "Hutton, is it true that you Moravians marry without any previous knowledge of each other?"

"Yes, may it please your Majesty," returned Hutton. "Our marriages are quite royal."

Towards the close of this letter Hannah tells her sisters that she cannot spare time to write another word, as she is very busy copying *The Bas Bleu* for the King, who desires to have it. She finds time, however, to add that Johnson has written to tell her he longs to see her, "to praise *The Bas Bleu* as much as envy can praise."

It is still April when Hannah goes with a friend to pay Johnson a visit. "He received me," she writes, "with the greatest kindness and affection, and as to *The Bas Bleu*, all the flattery I ever received from everybody together would not make up the sum. He said—but I seriously insist you do not tell anybody, for I am ashamed of writing it even to you—he said there was no name in poetry that might not be glad to own it! You cannot imagine how I stared: all this from Johnson, that parsimonious praiser. I told him I was delighted at his approbation; he answered quite characteristically,

'And so you may, for I give you the opinion of a man who does not rate his judgment in these things very low, I can tell you.'"

We must remember that *The Bas Bleu* was still unprinted. Dr. Heberden [1] had made her a long visit just before, and had been eager for her to publish it, but she had steadily refused to do so, and Roberts says that the request made to her sisters not to show the above to any one was strictly complied with. As for Johnson's high opinion of the poem, it is confirmed in one of his letters to Mrs. Thrale, where he says, "Miss More has written a poem called *The Bas Bleu*, which is in my opinion a very great performance. It wanders about in manuscript, and surely will soon find its way to Bath."

Mr. Pepys had also prophesied that every reading and writing Miss at Margate would soon have a copy, and Mrs. Boscawen had written, "I am proud to think what a respectable figure I make in my own county of Kent; for all Margate have read these pretty compliments by now." Margate was then a fashionable watering-place, almost rivalling Bath as a gay health-resort. We constantly find it mentioned in the letters of the titled and the wealthy at this period.

Hannah More was now in her fortieth year, but she had lost neither her vivacity nor her good looks, and was as popular as ever whenever she appeared amongst those who were able to appreciate her sparkling wit and her charming personality. Meredith remarks in the preface to one of his novels that a witty woman is a treasure, but a witty beauty is a power; and there is no question that Hannah More had a good share of both wit and good looks. We have already noted that her *Percy* was translated into both French and German. It

[1] It was of Dr. Heberden that Cowper wrote:—

"Virtuous and faithful Heberden, whose skill,
Attempts no task it cannot well fulfil."—*Retirement.*

was during this spring (1784) that France honoured her by electing her a member of the *Academie Française*. On the very day the news reached her she was taken ill, but "by the aid of blistering" soon recovered. "My time," she writes to Mrs. Boscawen, "has been all taken up with answering all my letters from France. The gentleman who wrote to me in the name of the Academy has translated *Percy* and several other of my things into French. He gave me the instructions how I was to act, and in what manner I was to write to the whole Academy collectively; and what is worst, told me that my letter of thanks, which must be in French, was to be transcribed, and preserved in the archives of the Academy. Oh, how I wished for the amiable *Hostesse de Glanvilla* at my elbow, to have written this letter for me! My desire of concealing this honour did not spring from any kind of affectation, but from a real and deep consciousness how little claim I have to such a title."

The summer months spent with her sisters in Bristol were not necessarily seasons of retirement. Not only was Bristol within a pleasant ride from Bath, the health-resort of all the great world of fashion, but it had its own hot springs, and its own *rendezvous* of fashion. Hannah tells Mrs. Boscawen, in the letter just quoted from, that she finds it very difficult to write letters with so much company and so many interruptions. "Bristol," she adds, "is as bad as London, without being so good. I have seen a good many of your Kentish friends lately, not one of whom, however, do I include as provoking the above lamentation — Mrs. E. Bouverie, Miss Marsham, Lady Hales, and Lady Plymouth's family. We made such large parties that I fancied myself not in Bristol but London. Add to all this, that the Provost of Eton and Mrs. Roberts are on a visit to our Dean's, which causes visiting, and replies, and rejoinders without end." And again: "Bristol has all the bustle of London, and leaves me almost as little time

to myself, but one must submit to the disadvantages of an acquaintance too large to be select; yet here are many excellent persons."

Any one who has read the first hundred pages of this volume will already be aware that Hannah More was a voracious reader; yet I have no time or space to mention a third of the books casually mentioned in her letters as in course of being read. She valued reading too much, however, to peruse every book that crossed her path, and every volume was taken up for a good reason, and after due thought. She writes to Mrs. Boscawen, "My five volumes of Hoole's *Ariosto* are just brought me: each volume has a very pretty frontispiece, and that, I believe, is as far as I shall go. I mean no disrespect to the translation, which I take to be a very good one; and people of taste will be glad that English literature is enriched with a good version of so original a poet; but this great but naughty poet must be read, if read at all, in the original."

The strictness of British censorship of Roman Catholic literature coming from abroad must have been very great in that day, for Hannah tells Mrs. Boscawen that many prints, pamphlets and other little things sent her from Rouen were confiscated at Brighthelmstone (Brighton), because there happened to be a popish prayer-book among them, and were all condemned to be burnt. "Much to my regret," adds Hannah characteristically, "as it will grieve the senders."

As the autumn months draw on Hannah begins to look forward to her annual visit to Mrs. Garrick, to take place in December. "To hear birds sing one six months, and men talk for the other," she writes to the same friend, "is a grateful vicissitude. I hope to get to Mrs. Garrick in December, and to knock some fine morning at a double door in Audley Street, before I take the veil at Hampton; for we really live as quiet as solitary nuns; but as it is not *for ever*, I like it pro-

digiously, particularly as it gives me (and it is the only place that does so), opportunity to indulge my appetite for reading to the full extent of its voracity. I mix light anecdote with grave metaphysics. I read last spring Monsieur de St. Simon, which is easy of digestion, after dinner; and Mr. Locke, which requires the mind and faculties to be broad awake, after tea. Mr. Stewart's new history of Scotland lay on the table, and presented its handsome type to me in vain, till I had finished Mr. Hayley's new work; the poet before the historian is, I think but lawful precedence, unless for those who are proselytes to Sir Harry S——'s opinion, that poets are the best authors next to those who write prose."

We now come to a very interesting episode in the life of our poetess; one by which she herself was deeply affected, and one which occasioned a great deal of interesting correspondence between herself and many of her friends—the story of the poetical milkwoman.

It was while Hannah was at Bristol this summer (1784), that the cook one day came to the Misses More with a sad story about the poor woman who was in the habit of calling at the kitchen door for scraps with which to feed her pig. The woman was, with her husband and a large family of children, almost starving for want of bread. The ladies at once looked into the case with their usual kindheartedness, and discovered that the woman, Mrs. Yearsley, was no ordinary milkwoman, as they had at first supposed, but a poetical genius, who, utterly without education, had produced some comparatively remarkable verses. The ladies, on reading these scraps of poetry, composed by the unhappy creature in the midst of her want and misery, became deeply interested in her and her family; they at once began raising a fund to set her up in some way of earning her living that would be more suited to her talents; and Hannah, being herself a poetess, not unnaturally took a special interest in the case. It seems that she

herself undertook to teach Mrs. Yearsley the elementary rules of spelling and writing and to lend her books. She helped her to make a collection of all the verses she had written, and while doing this she wrote statements of the case to all her most influential friends, soliciting their help on the poor woman's behalf. She proposed to raise by subscription a sum sufficient to put Mrs. Yearsley in more comfortable circumstances and to apprentice one of her children to some useful trade. For more than thirteen months Hannah devoted the greater part of her time to helping her new protégée ; amongst other things she found time to copy and correct Mrs. Yearsley's verses, and prepare them for publication. The writing alone that was involved in this task, and in correspondence on her behalf, would have covered at least a thousand pages.

There has been much question and discussion among the learned, as to the degree of eminence that can be reached by uncultivated genius, in literature or in any one of the sister arts. I remember that the poet Cowper, when the poetry of an uneducated servant girl was submitted to him for criticism, wrote to a friend that, in his opinion, no real excellence in poetry could ever be reached without a good education ; and surely he was right. One would think that, to a competent judge, the poetry, however gifted, of an ignorant person, could be little better than the playing on a violin or piano by a street urchin with a remarkably correct ear for music. Just as the street urchin with the correct ear would catch and repeat the strains and harmonies he had heard in a church, or picked up from the playing of a public band, and weave them into a connected composition of his own, so an entirely uneducated person with an ear for versification might manufacture long poems from the scraps of expressions picked up from church hymns, and a few stray poetry books that may have happened to fall in their way. While visiting at

the house of some Spanish friends in Andalusia some years ago, I remember the old grandmother showing me with great pride some verses that had appeared under her signature in a local newspaper.

"I will show you how I composed them," said the old lady, smiling; and opening a book of poetry that happened to be near, she covered all but the last word of each line with a piece of writing-paper. "There," she continued, "that's what I did; then I only had to choose my subject, and fill in the beginning of each line so that it suited the endings of the poem I had covered."

It is quite possible that the milkwoman we are treating of had some such ingenious method, at least at the outset of her poetical career. Sometimes, too, it happens that people borrow from the works of others almost unconsciously. I heard of a case where a novelist of some repute borrowed a whole scene from Balzac, and was quite unaware of the fact till a publisher's reader pointed it out to him. Another case that has recently come under my notice is that of a musician who, in composing the music for a musical play, worked into it quite unconsciously a theme from one of the great Italian operas. His surprise, when an opera singer made him aware of it, was unbounded.

Hannah More's friends at once responded to her appeal on behalf of the milkwoman, and subscriptions poured in, till she soon found she had collected a sum of more than £500. This was at once invested under the trusteeship of Mrs. Montagu, who had always shown herself a warm friend to rising genius, especially that of poetry or literature. On Hannah's sending her some specimens of Mrs. Yearsley's poetry, this lady wrote from Sandleford: "Now . . . let me come to the wondrous story of the milkwoman. Indeed she is one of Nature's miracles. What force of imagination! What harmony of numbers! In Pagan times one would have supposed Apollo had fallen in love with her rosy

cheek, snatched her to the top of Parnassus, given her a glass of his best helicon, and ordered the nine muses to attend her call; but as this heathen fiction will not pass now, let us consider whether Christian faith may not serve better. I imagine her mind has been enlightened and enlarged by the study of the Scriptures. In the prophets, in Job, and in the Psalms, there is a character of thought, and style of expression, between eloquence and poetry, from which a great mind, disposed to either, may be so elevated, and so warmed, as, with little other assistance, to become an orator or poet. The New Testament would purify the heart, and the hope of immortality raise the mind above all earthly cares, and all wishes bounded by mortal existence. Her native fire has not been damped by a load of learning. Flame is extinguished by throwing on it matter which does not contain any igneous particles. Avaunt, grammarians! stand away, logicians! far, far away, all heathen ethics, and mythology, geometry, algebra, and make room for the Bible and Milton, when a poet is to be made!"

This may be all very well, but we should like to remind Mrs. Montagu that without all the helps that she is so willing to dispense with we should never have had a Milton.

The milkwoman, Mrs. Ann Yearsley, whose maiden name has not been preserved, had had the misfortune to marry a very worthless, lazy, and good-for-nothing man; she had six children, all born within the first seven years of her married life. Having been born in 1756, she must have been just eleven years younger than Hannah More, and in her twenty-eighth year, when the attention of the sisters was first drawn to her. Her poems were published by subscription, and there were more than a thousand subscribers, among whom were many of the most illustrious names of the day. That the woman was something of a genius there can be little doubt, and

it is probable that, but for her own subsequent foolishness, she might have made somewhat of her talent. The first books that Hannah More supplied her with were a grammar and a dictionary, and from these she went on to others, and in this way the uneducated genuius seemed likely to become in time an educated one, and ignorance would not in the end have stood in her way to success.

It is interesting to note in this connection that Johnson's last conversation with Fanny Burney was on the subject of Hannah More's milkwoman. The old man was now gradually breaking up; he had had at least one severe stroke. In a letter to Mrs. Boscawen Hannah writes: "I am grieved to find that his (Johnson's) mind is still a pray to melancholy, and that the fear of death operates on him to the destruction of his peace. It is grievous—it is unaccountable. He who has the Christian hope upon the best foundation; whose faith is strong, whose morals are irreproachable! But I am willing to ascribe it to bad nerves and bodily disease." It is pretty certain that Hannah was right, and that the fear which so tormented the philosopher could not reasonably be traced to constitutional causes.

In the same letter Hannah writes: "Do you know that my poor milkwoman has been sent for to Stoke, to visit the Duchess of Beaufort (the daughter of the friend she is writing to, who was then in her beautiful country home in the neighbourhood of Bristol) and the Duchess of Rutland; and to Bath, to Lady Spencer, Mrs. Montagu, &c.? I hope all these honours will not turn her head, and indispose her for her humble occupations. I would rather have her served than flattered. Your noble and munificent friend, the Duchess Dowager of Portland, has sent me a twenty-pound bank-note for her; so as I take it she will soon be the richest poetess, certainly the richest milkwoman, in Great Britain."

We find in a letter from Mrs. Boscawen to Hannah in reply to the above, that the postage was then very high; a friend writing to her from Falmouth had been charged 2s. 9d. for her letter. No wonder Hannah was glad when she had plenty of friends among the members of Parliament, to frank her letters for her!

While staying with her daughter in Grosvenor Square, Mrs. Boscawen saw from her window the great balloon from Moorfields which had so many thousands of spectators. "Where all came from that I saw running, walking, crawling towards the spot, was to me incomprehensible. Admiral Barrington is hurt to think that no Englishman has gone up yet either in France or England, and indeed I thought it so suitable to English daring, that when first I heard of Messrs. Charles and Robert I affirmed they must have had English mothers. Lunardi's nest, when I saw it yesterday looking like a peg-top, seemed, I assure you, higher than the moon, 'riding towards her highest noon.'"

There seems to have been a craze for balloons about this time, for we find many allusions to daring attempts made by balloonists in the letters of contemporaries. A few months after the above letter was written, Elizabeth Carter wrote from Deal to a friend (June 24, 1785) about the tragic death of Pilatre de Rozier, who, while making an ascent near Boulogne in a Mongolfier balloon, was burned to death in the air, his balloon having caught fire. "Very shocking, indeed," she writes, "was the catastrophe of the last aerial excursion. It will be happy if this sad adventure puts an end to so wild abuse of courage and activity. After a very long trial, no one discovery has been made that tends to any useful purpose, either physical or moral, any more than the safer experiment of a paper kite. Poor Mr. Rozier had just married a lady of very considerable fortune. Several people in this neighbourhood were acquainted with him. His fate is particularly pitiful, if it be true, as I have

been told, that it was extremely against his inclination that he undertook this fatal flight; but it is said that the King of France insisted on his crossing the sea" (to Folkestone).

In a letter to Sir Horace Mann (in 1784), Horace Walpole mentions Lunardi, and his attempts at aviation, of which the papers were then full. "I cannot fill my paper as they do," he says, "with air-balloons; which, though ranked with navigation, appear to me as childish as the flying kites of schoolboys. I have not stirred a step to see one. . . . An Italian, one Lunardi, is the first *airgonaut* that has mounted into the clouds in this country; so far from respecting him as a Jason I was very angry with him; he has a full right to venture his own neck, but none to risk a poor cat, who, not having proved a martyr, is at least better entitled to be a confessor than her master Dædalus. You must know I have no idea of space: when I heard how wonderfully he had soared, I concluded he had arrived within a stone's throw of the moon—alas! he had not ascended above a mile and a half; so pitiful an ascension degraded him totally in my conceit. As there are mountains twice as high, what signifies flying if you do not rise above the top of the earth? Any man on foot may walk higher than this man-eagle."

In May 1785, Horace Walpole again wrote to Sir Horace Mann: "Of conversation, the chief topic is air-balloons. A French girl, daughter of a dancer, has made a voyage into the clouds, and nobody has yet broken a neck, so neither good nor harm has hitherto been produced by these aerial enterprises."

After a visit to Mrs. Walsingham this year, at Thames Ditton, Hannah More wrote to Mrs. Boscawen: "As you well know that your friend Mrs. Walsingham is all sense and spirit, you will readily believe that our time passed very pleasantly at Thames Ditton; nothing could surpass her politeness. I said I had never seen

an air-balloon; she struck with her magic wand, and lo! a balloon appeared, forty-five feet in circumference."

In the same letter she tells her friend: "I am now reading with great appetite Professor White's Sermons. It is long since I have met with a more noble, judicious, spirited, and eloquent defence of the Christian religion. His parallel of Christ and Mahomet is drawn with great piety, skill, and temper. This last quality always weighs prodigiously with me. Champions defeat their end when they vilify beyond the truth. Those who say that Mahomet was not a person of very great sagacity, help his cause."

We will conclude this chapter by quoting a few lines from the milkwoman's poem on the Mysterious Lady of the Haystack. It seems almost incredible that "Louisa" could have existed for three winters in the open air. Yet these lines seem to prove it.[1]

> "Beneath the stack Louisa's dwelling rose.
> Here the fair maniac bore three winter's snows;
> Here long she shivered, stiffening in the blast:
> The lightning round their livid horrors cast:
> The thunders roar, while rushing torrents pour,
> And add new woes to black affliction's hour."

[1] See Chap. XII. The lines quoted here do not give us a very high opinion of Mrs. Yearsley's poetical talent. It is on account of their subject that we have selected them.

CHAPTER XVI

THE DEATH OF JOHNSON

HANNAH MORE'S poem, *The Bas Bleu*, contained, like the previous one, *Sensibility*, many allusions to the noted persons of her day, which to a modern reader, unacquainted with the individual characteristics of these eighteenth-century celebrities, are in danger of appearing quite unintelligible, but which must have added considerable interest to the poems for contemporary readers. Horace Walpole was among the persons referred to in *The Bas Bleu*, and his first recorded letter to Hannah More is the one written in the third person, in which he thanks her for letting him have a copy of the poem, and also for her kind allusion in it to himself. It has been stated [1] that she became acquainted with Horace Walpole in 1784, but this is incorrect, for we find him alluded to in her letters of the year 1781 as "my friend Mr. Walpole," and there is constant reference to him in her letters, and to his interesting conversations with her at Blue-stocking parties. She says herself that she corresponded with him for more than twenty years.

Mrs. Vesey, to whom the poem was addressed, wrote to Hannah from Margate: "I have read your poem but once, for Mr. Vesey took it from me, and read it with such delight as I cannot express. . . . Airing is generally a dull hour, but here it is enlivened by the dashing of the sea, and the prospect of the fatal Goodwin Sands, which have been under the inspection of the Royal Society, and the danger is now found to be suction. This I had from a daughter of Sir Cloudesly Shovel. . . .

[1] See *Dict. of Nat. Biog.*

I am very glad Mrs. Garrick and you gave Mrs. Montagu the pleasure of your company; her resources of conversation are as inexhaustible as her friendship; she will certainly go down to distant ages, while Garrick and More will partake the gale. . . . Let me conclude with what I feel for the place you have given me in your charming poem; though undeserving I am not unfeeling." To this letter she adds in a postscript: "I have met with a fragment of Gray's upon Kingsgate, with a fine poetical picture of the Goodwin Sands, and the uninhabited monastery, but so malevolent against the builder, that I cannot believe it to be all his own."

The aged General Oglethorpe, to whom Hannah had taken such a fancy the previous season, was really in his ninetieth year, having been born in 1696. He has come down to us in the character of the philanthropic colonist of Georgia. In his own day he was looked upon as the man who of that day had the greatest insight into the subject of pauperism, and it was on this and kindred philanthropic subjects, in all probability, that Hannah found his conversation so fascinating, for she was herself a born philanthropist. It was of General Oglethorpe that Pope wrote the lines, in his *Imitation of Horace*:—

> "One driven by strong benevolence of soul,
> Shall fly like Oglethorpe from pole to pole."

On July 17, 1784, Hannah More wrote to Mr. Pepys from Bristol: "My reading has been idle as the rest of my employments, and if I do not soon reform, I shall become a convert to the entreaties of my gay and gallant friend, General Oglethorpe, who has long been trying to proselyte me to the old romance; gravely lamenting that the only fault I have is refusing to read the old romances; assuring me that it is the only way to acquire noble sentiments; but I do confess that hitherto I have never been able to get through a single page of histories which have no approximation to the manners and passions

of this world. I must have men and women, with whom I can have sentiments, affections, and interests in common: I don't care how romantic the story, or how exalted the character, provided it be still probable adventure, a possible perfection. I have just laboured through Dryden's *Fables*, chiefly out of complaisance to Mrs. Montagu, Mr. Walpole, and Dr. Burney, but like a confirmed bigot, all that I read on the other side of the question only serves to confirm me more steadfastly in the old faith. I am ready to allow the beauty of a multitude of passages, the spirit of the expression, and the vigour and variety of the versification, but they have the deadly poetical sin of not interesting me; nor do lines from them occur to my mind every hour, suitable to every character and every occurrence, as they do from Shakespeare, the poet of human actions and human passions; and from Pope, the eternal embellisher of common sense, common life, and just thinking; whose every line is a maxim or a portrait."

In the above letter, referring to some suggested alteration in her last poem, she says: "Sometimes I am puzzled about rhyming, whether it should be to the eye, or to the ear, but am never quite contented with a rhyme which does not satisfy both."

In reply to Hannah's remarks about the old romances, Mr. Pepys wrote that he himself was no reader of them, but he thought there was a proper season in life for them. "The old romances had, no doubt," he continues, "a tendency to elevate that passion which it has been the business of the modern romance to debase; and as works of imagination, I do not doubt that they are excellent, but though I should be sorry that my little boy should not pass through the medium of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, nay, that he should not, in a particular stage of his imagination, prefer the wild imagination and the false brilliancy of that romantic poet, to the chaste, sober, and correct beauties of Virgil; yet, if after he had once

tasted the charms of truth and simplicity, he should go back and give a preference to the former, I should consider it as a kind of apostasy." Mr. Pepys goes on to thank Hannah for recommending him Miss Seward's *Louisa*, over which he has shed many tears. He then goes on to recommend to her Harris's *Philosophical Arrangements*, " which if you have any delight in metaphysical abstraction is so far a valuable work as it gives you some idea of those speculations for which (among other things) Aristotle is placed so high in the temple of Fame," but he owns that his interest in metaphysics has received a shock by Mrs. Montagu's having applied to that study the old riddle, " A roomful, and a houseful, but nobody can catch a handful."

In a letter to Elizabeth Carter a few weeks later Hannah gives her opinion of a book that was much in vogue : " I have read the first volume only of *Les Veillécs de Château* (by Madame de Genlis). What a surprising talent that woman has of making everything that passes through her hands interesting! the barrenest and most unpromising subjects she ' turns to favour and prettiness.' Yet this is the woman with whom, I am told upon unquestionable authority, I must not cultivate a friendship. Can it be possible, my dear friend, that she who labours with so much ability and success in the great vineyard of education, should herself be deficient in the important qualities which she so skilfully paints, and so powerfully recommends ? What motives for humiliation, for self-distrust, and circumspection in one's own conduct does such a character suggest to me ! I am never so effectually humbled as in contemplating the defects of a shining character."

Hannah's next letter to Elizabeth Carter quite refutes Charlotte Yonge's statement that Hannah had no eye for scenery : " I spent that month (September) in one of the most enchanting vales of Somersetshire. The surrounding scenery was so lovely, so full of innocent

wildness, that I do not know any place that ever caught such hold of my imagination. If the spring is the poet's season, it must be allowed that autumn is the painter's. Such delicious warmth in the colouring of the woods! Every morning I rode through the most delightful valleys, or crept along the sides of the most beautiful hanging woods, where the blue smoke ascending from the cleanest white cottages in the world had the prettiest effect imaginable: it was a sort of thin grey ether, a kind of poetical smoke, which seemed too pretty to be connected with the useful—very unlike the gross, substantial culinary vapour which suggests ideas only of corporeal and common things."

In the winter we find Hannah once more with Mrs. Garrick at the Adelphi, whence she writes to her sister of a very grand party she has been to (at the Bishop of St. Asaph's): "The Prince of Wales was there. He was reckoned to come excessively early—half-past ten; you will judge what a time it was before we got away; though it was only a *private* party of about two hundred, and I believe the Bishop was heartily glad when he got rid of us. For my part, I do not desire to be ever again in such a crowd, whether of the great vulgar or the small!"

At a party at Mrs. Vesey's Hannah had a long talk with Edmund Burke, chiefly about General Oglethorpe: "He told me," she reports, "with great truth, that he looked upon him as a more extraordinary person than any he had read of, for that he had founded the province of Georgia; had absolutely called it into existence, and lived to see it severed from the empire which created it, and become an independent state. I could have added, Whose wicked eloquence was it that helped to bring about this mighty revolution? and by his looks I believe the venerable Nestor had the same thought."

Mrs. Delany has just celebrated her eightieth birthday, and Hannah has been to pay her congratulations. She

had received company all the morning, had a party at dinner, and spent the evening with the King and Queen, who insisted that they should have her company on her birthday and had taken her to the Handel Commemoration.

Hannah is still collecting money for her protegée, the milkwoman, and has again been in correspondence with Mrs. Montagu about her, but Mrs. Montagu is cautious; she has helped many a rising genius in the past, and some of them have turned out badly. She writes to Hannah: "I am charmed with your account of the poetical milkwoman. . . . I beg you to inform yourself as much as you can, of her temper, disposition, and moral character. I speak not this out of an apprehension of merely wasting a few guineas, but lest I should do harm where I intend to confer benefit. It has sometimes happened to me that, by an endeavour to encourage talents and cherish virtue, by driving from them the terrifying spectre of pale poverty, I have introduced a legion of little demons. Idleness and pride have entered the cottage the moment poverty vanished."

Mrs. Montagu's fears proved only too well founded. The milkwoman's head was soon turned by the attention paid her by Hannah's friends, and she began to express her rage and disappointment when she found that all the money collected was not going to be given to her at once to dispose of as she liked. She was also very angry at Hannah's mentioning her in the preface she wrote to her book of poems, as an object of charity. From complaints the wretched woman went on to calumnies, as absurd as they were ferocious. Roberts relates how, when the Duchess of Devonshire had sent her, through Hannah More, Bell's Edition of the Poets, the latter had held them for her till she could find her some bookshelves on which to place them. Mrs. Yearsley at once wrote to her Grace, complaining that the books were kept back from her, and at the same time spread

a report in the neighbourhood that Hannah was buying herself an estate with the money she had raised for her benefit. To such a length did the woman go that Hannah and Mrs. Montagu, not wishing to let her waste the money by indulging in the vices to which they now found she was addicted, placed it in the hands of a lawyer, who made it over to "a rich and honourable merchant of Bristol, who in his turn was soon harassed into relinquishing the whole concern. As for Hannah, she never attempted to clear herself of the accusations made against her, and we see from her letters how beautiful was the spirit in which she received and bore with them.

A certain number of Bristol people supported the milkwoman, but, deprived of Hannah's patronage, her prospects soon sank, though she went on writing poetry for some time, and even tried her hand at a play entitled *Earl Goodwin*, which was performed in Bath in 1789. In 1795 she published a historical novel, *The Royal Captives*, on the story of *The Man with the Iron Mask*. She pretended to have copied from an old manuscript proving her hero to be a twin brother of Louis XIV. Her volume of poetry, entitled *The Rural Lyre*, is to be seen in the British Museum. This edition was published in 1794, and is dedicated to the Earl of Bristol. Clever and capable as she must truly have been, we see in turning over the pages that there was a great deal of the parrot in her, for her pages swarm with such names as Jove, Olympus, and the like allusions to classical mythology, of which she knew no more than the bird to which we compare her. In a note in this volume she tells her readers that some of the manuscripts she placed in the hands of Hannah More were never returned!

"We are often told," wrote Oscar Wilde, "that the poor are grateful for charities; some of them are, no doubt, but the best among the poor are never grateful." And he adds, "There is only one class in the community that thinks more about money than the rich, and that is

the poor." Mrs. Yearsley was determined to get into her own undisputed possession every penny that Hannah's friends had subscribed for her, and she obtained her object, though in obtaining it she lost her best and truest friend. Her name, we are told, was from that time branded with ingratitude, as well it might be. Cottle, who knew Hannah from her childhood, and was in the neighbourhood at the time of this affair, was of the opinion that Mrs. Yearsley's fault was more one of indiscretion than of ingratitude, and he thought it would have been better if Hannah had handed all the money over to her at the first; but surely, if the woman had ruined herself with it, the fault would then justly have lain at the door of her patroness. The milkwoman's portrait was painted by Sarah Shiells, and there is an engraving of her in *The Rural Lyre*. Her eldest son, William, was apprenticed to an engraver, and some of the illustrations in his mother's book are his, but he died young. Mrs. Yearsley was set up with a small circulating library, but she soon ran through the money subscribed for her, and eventually died in great poverty, having lost the respect and friendship of every person who had been interested in her.

Mrs. Boscawen wrote to condole with Hannah on having been "made so uneasy by that odious woman," and Mrs. Montagu wrote that for her part she would always prefer to be the dupe of another's hypocrisy than of her own suspicion, and added: "Mrs. Yearsley's conceit that you can envy her talents gives me comfort; for as it convinces me that she is mad, I build upon it a hope that she is not guilty in the All-seeing Eye."

In December 1784 Hannah wrote to her sisters from Hampton to tell them that poor Johnson was dying, and that he had sent for Sir Joshua Reynolds that he might ask three favours of him—that he would never paint on a Sunday; that he would forgive him thirty pounds he had lent him, as he wanted to leave it to a distressed family; and that he would read the

Bible whenever he had an opportunity, and never omit to read it on a Sunday. To all three Sir Joshua had given his promise, though he hesitated somewhat about the last request.

Johnson died of dropsy, on December 13 of that year (1784), at the age of seventy-six. After Hannah More's death a letter addressed to her by some friend, and apparently without a signature, was found among her papers which gave an account, taken down from the lips of the Rev. Mr. Storry of Colchester, about Dr. Johnson's death, and the state of his feelings as regards religious matters. Roberts has inserted this letter in Hannah's biography, and it caused some discussion. Doubts were raised as to its authenticity, but they were satisfactorily met and answered by Roberts in the preface to his third edition.

Among the friends whom Hannah had interested in her milkwoman was Horace Walpole; he not only subscribed money, but he corresponded with Hannah as to the books she should give her to study, and offered to supply her with some. He thought Hannah had made a mistake in giving her his *Castle of Otranto* to read, and advised Dryden's *Fables* as more suitable. Writing of Mrs. Yearsley, or "Lactilla," as she called herself, to the Countess of Ossory, in December 1786, he said: "Her ingratitude to Miss More has been superlative. The latter laboured unweariedly to collect subscriptions for her, and was at expense herself in the publication, and, lest the husband, who is a dolt, should waste the sum collected, placed it out at interest for her, as trustee, beside having washed and combed her trumpery verses for her, and taught them to dance in tune. The foolish woman's head, turned with this change of fortune, and applause, and concluding that her talent, which was only wonderful from her sphere and state of ignorance, was marvellous genius, she grew enraged at Miss More for presuming to prune her wild shoots, and in her passion

accused her benevolent and beneficent friend of defrauding her of part of the collected charity. In short she abuses Miss More grossly, has written a volume of scurrility against her, and is really to be pitied, as she has grown extravagant and ostentatious. Am I wrong, madam, in thinking that these parish Sapphos had better be bound 'prentice to mantua-makers than be appointed chambermaids to mademoiselles the Muses ? "

In 1786 Horace Walpole wrote again to the Countess of Ossory, " I am not surprised that there should be a great party for the milkwoman. The wise people of Bristol have taken it into their heads that they have a manufacture of original genius *chez eux*, and the less foundation they have for their credulity the stronger their faith is, as always is the case with fools. Great was Diana of the Ephesians, though they made her image themselves. If Lactilla puts gin into her milk and kills herself she will be immortal, and Mr. Hayley and Mr. Cumberland will write hymns to her—with all my heart."

We should like to show the reader the beautiful spirit in which Hannah herself met the ingratitude and enmity of the woman she had so befriended. After writing a long letter to Mr. Pepys, she added a postscript : " I am come to the postscript, without having found courage to tell you what I am sure you will hear with pain ; at least it gives me infinite pain to write it—I mean the most open and notorious ingratitude of our milkwoman. There is hardly a species of slander the poor unhappy creature does not propagate against me, in the most public manner, because I have called her a milkwoman, and because I have placed the money in the funds, instead of letting her spend it. I confess my weakness, it goes to my heart, not for my own sake, but for the sake of our common nature ; so much for my inward feelings : as to my active resentment, I am trying to get a place for her husband, and am endeavour-

ing to make up the sum I have raised for her to five hundred pounds. Do not let this harden your heart or mine against any future object. *Fate bene per voi* is a beautiful maxim. One of her charges is that I design to defraud her children of the money after her death; and this to my face, the second time she saw me after I came hither. Poor human nature! I could weep over thee! Nothing but the sanctifying influence of religion can subdue and keep in tolerable order that pride which is the concomitant of great talents with a bad education."

Mr. Pepys, writing to Hannah More from Wimpole Street in 1785, said: "I am particularly glad of this opportunity of telling you . . . how much I envy you the part you have taken with regard to the milkwoman; which you, at least, will remember with more pleasure than the finest verses or the best written scene you ever composed."

After the death of Dr. Johnson Hannah wrote to her sister: "Mrs. Garrick is gone to town to go to a mass, but I desired to stay behind. Mr. Pepys wrote me a very kind letter on the death of Johnson. . . . Dr. Brockleby, his physician, was with him. He said to him a little before he died, 'Doctor, you are a worthy man, and my friend, but I am afraid you are not a Christian; what can I do better for you than offer up in your presence a prayer to the great God that you may become a Christian in my sense of the word?' Instantly he fell upon his knees, and put up a fervent prayer: when he got up he caught hold of his hand with great earnestness, and cried, 'Doctor! you do not say Amen.' The doctor looked foolish, but after a pause cried 'Amen!' Johnson said, 'My dear doctor, believe a dying man, there is no salvation but in the sacrifice of the Lamb of God; go home, write down my prayer, and every word I have said, and bring it to me to-morrow.' Brockleby did so. A friend desired he would make his will, and as

Hume in the last moments had made an impious declaration of his opinions, he thought it might tend to counteract the poison if Johnson would make a public confession of his faith in his will. He said he would, seized the pen with great earnestness, and asked what was the usual form of beginning a will. His friend told him. After the usual forms he wrote, 'I offer up my soul to the great and merciful God; I offer it full of pollution, but in full assurance that it will be cleansed in the blood of my Redeemer.' And for some time he wrote on with the same vigour and spirit as if he had been in perfect health. When he expressed some of his former dread of dying, Sir John said, 'If you, doctor, have these fears, what is to become of me and others?' 'Oh, sir,' said he, 'I have written piously, it is true; but I have lived too much like other men.' It was a consolation to him, however, in his last hours that he had never written in derogation of religion or virtue. He talked of his death and funeral at times with great composure. On the Monday morning he fell into a sound sleep, and continued in that state for twelve hours, and then died without a groan."

The letter coincides with a few of Hannah's own musings on the death of this great man: "No action of his life," she wrote, "became him like the leaving it. His death makes a kind of era in literature. Piety and goodness will not easily find a more able defender, and it is delightful to see him set, as it were, his dying seal to the profession of his life, and to the truth of Christianity. I now recollect with melancholy pleasure two little anecdotes of this departed genius, indicating a zeal for religion which one cannot but admire, however characteristically rough. When the Abbé Reynal was introduced to him, upon the Abbé's advancing to take his hand, Doctor Johnson drew back and put his hands behind him, and afterwards replied to the expostulation of a friend: 'Sir, I will not shake hands with an infidel.'

At another time I remember asking him if he did not think the Dean of Derry a very agreeable man, to which he made no answer, and on my repeating my question, 'Child,' said he, 'I will not speak anything in favour of a Sabbath-breaker, to please you nor any one else.'"

CHAPTER XVII

LIFE IN A COTTAGE

It had been one of Hannah More's childish ambitions that she might some day live in a cottage of her own, with a ceiling too low for a clock; and now, as she was approaching middle age, and getting somewhat weary of the hurry and bustle of social life in the metropolis, her thoughts returned once more to this wish of her childhood. As we have seen, the summers spent in Bristol, in the home in which her sisters carried on their school, gave her little more quiet time for thought and study than she had in London, and her only real months of leisure were those spent at Hampton with Mrs. Garrick, during the months of December and January of each year. She now began to look for a quiet spot where she could have a little cottage all her own, to which she could retire whenever she required a month or two of peaceful solitude. A pretty spot, about ten miles from Bristol, on the Exeter road, was the one she finally selected, and here she built the cottage afterwards so well known as "Cowslip Green." [1] While this new home was in course of construction, Mrs. Montagu wrote to Hannah that Mrs. Vesey (who was now in reduced circumstances) was charmed with her description of her cottage, and would much like to have one of her own. "I am afraid she would be disappointed," adds Mrs. Montagu; "a cottage affords a sweet retreat to the contented mind, or a charming indulgence to the scholar's melancholy, which is fantastical, but affords little diversion to real sorrow, connected with departed

[1] Cowslip Green is still standing and inhabited.

friends, and substantial evils arising from the course of human things."

Hannah wrote to Mr. Pepys from Bristol in the summer of 1785: "I have the mortification to find my cottage will not be ready for me this summer. . . . I shall be greatly obliged to you for the book you are so good as to propose to send me. I am fitting up a tiny boudoir at Cowslip Green, which I intend shall contain no literature but the offerings of kindness; by this means my imagination will convert my little closet into a temple of friendship; and when the weather is bad, or my spirits low, what a cordial it will be to fancy that I am loved and esteemed by so many amiable and worthy people as have there contributed to my instruction and delight. I am mightily at a loss to know what book you shall give me; I have been thinking these two hours to no purpose. What think you of a cookery book? No, that won't do, either, for that will introduce sauces and luxury, and all manner of cunningly devised dishes and extravagant inventions, into a little cottage devoted to simplicity, and from which aspiring thoughts and luxurious desires are to be entirely excluded. I should beg a wooden spoon, and a maple dish, but that it is pleasanter to one's friends to be remembered in one's more intellectual hours. . . . But pray take notice, it must not be a fine new book out of a shop; that would destroy the charm, which lies in this, that the book must be transplanted from the library of a friend."

Several of Hannah's letters this summer mention a proposed journey to the Lakes with Mrs. Garrick, but for some reason or other this journey never took place. She remained in Bristol until the autumn, when she again joined Mrs. Garrick in London. It was during this summer that her friend Mrs. Delany, now eighty-five years of age, sent her a copy of some lines she had composed the previous year. They refer to the wonderful flower mosaic of which she was the inventor, and of which

a fine masterpiece may still be seen in the British Museum. It was not until she had reached her seventy-fourth year that she invented her paper mosaic imitations of flowers. Sir Joseph Banks, the famous naturalist, considered her work to be the only imitations of nature he had ever seen from which he could venture to describe botanically any plant without fear of a mistake. Her work is also referred to by Dr. Erasmus Darwin in his *Botanic Garden*. She used to place a growing plant before her, and behind it a sheet of black paper, and with the aid of her eyes alone she would then cut out each part of the flower in paper of the appropriate colour. Many of her flowers were copied from rare specimens from Kew, and she procured her shades of coloured paper from all parts of the world, often from China. She has left upwards of a thousand specimens of her work. She continued working at her *flora* till she was eighty-two years of age, and then she wrote the following lines, preserved by Hannah More :

"The time is come I can no more
The vegetable world explore.
No more with rapture cull each flower,
That paints the mead and twines the bower;
No more with admiration see
Its perfect form and symmetry;
No more attempt, with hope elate,
Its lovely lines to imitate.
Farewell to all these active powers,
That blessed my solitary hours,
Alas! farewell! how shall I mourn
As one who is of hope forlorn?
Come, Holy Spirit! on thy wing
Thy sacred consolation bring:
Teach me to contemplate thy grace,
That hath so long sustained my race;
That various blessings still bestows,
And pours in balm to all my woes.
Teach me submissive to resign,
When summoned by thy will divine." [1]

[1] See her Life, by George Paston.

Had Hannah More lived in our day she would certainly have lamented our declining birth-rate and the smallness of the twentieth-century family, for she was a strong advocate of the large family. In a letter to Mr. Pepys at this time she observes: "I have always remarked, in my small observation of human life, that large families were more virtuous, more happy, and even, as to the things of this world, more prosperous, than those in which there is a single solitary cub to plague his parents, despise his tutors, and torment his dependents. Such a little opulent, important animal I have seldom known escape the miseries of an education which is poisoned at the very springs."

Hannah's next letter to her sisters from London contains two strange anecdotes: "I believe I mentioned that a foreign Ambassador, Count Aldemar, had a stroke of apoplexy, and that he was to have had a great assembly in the night of the day on which it happened; it is shocking to relate the sequel. It was on a Sunday. The company went—some hundreds. The man lay deprived of sense and motion. His bed-chamber joins the great drawing-room, where was a faro bank held close to his bed's head. Somebody said they thought they made too much noise. 'Oh no,' another answered, 'it will do him good; the worst thing he can do is to sleep.' A third said, 'I did not think Aldemar would be a fellow of such rare spirit; palsy and faro together is spirit indeed. This is keeping it up!' I was telling this to Mr. Walpole the other day, and lamenting it as a national stigma, and one of the worst signs of the times I had met with. In return he told me of a French gentleman in Paris, who being in the article of death, just signed his will, when the lawyer who drew it up was invited by his wife to stay to supper. The table was laid in the dying man's apartments; the lawyer took a glass of wine, and addressing himself to the lady, drank *à la santé de notre aimable agonisant*. I told Mr. Walpole he

invented the story to outdo me, but he protested it was literally true."

In the same letter she continues: "You know I have often told you that Sunday is not only my day of rest, but of enjoyment. I go twice to the churches where I expect the best preaching; frequently to St. Clements, to hear my excellent friend Dr. Burrows. By the way, it gives me peculiar pleasure to think that I there partook of the holy sacrament with Johnson the last time he ever received it in public. It was very considerate of Mrs. Garrick to decline company on Sunday on my account; so that I enjoy the whole day to myself. I swallow no small portion of theology of different descriptions, and I always read when visiting such books as I do not possess at home. After my more select reading I have attacked South, Atterbury, and Warburton. In the great geniuses and original thinkers I see many passages of Scripture presented in a strong and striking light. I think it right to mix their learned labours with the devout effusions of more spirited writers, Baxter, Doddridge, Hall, Hopkins, Jeremy Taylor (the Shakespeare of divinity), and the profound Barrow in turn. In the evening I read a sermon and prayers to the family, which Mrs. Garrick much likes."

At this time Johnson's energetic biographer had already begun his monumental work, and Hannah wrote to her sisters: "Boswell tells me he is printing anecdotes of Johnson, not his life, but, as he has the vanity to call it, his pyramid. I besought his tenderness for our virtuous and most revered departed friend, and begged he would mitigate some of his asperities. He said roughly, "He would not cut off his claws nor make a tiger a cat to please anybody. It will, I doubt not, be a very amusing book, but I hope not an indiscreet one; he has great enthusiasm and some fire." The above extract has more than once been misquoted against Hannah More to make her seem to suggest that

Boswell should tamper with the truth in giving his picture of Johnson to the world. Readers can judge of her real meaning for themselves.

Here is another amusing anecdote which Hannah sent to her sisters: "I have seldom heard," she wrote, "a more curious instance of the absence of mind produced by poetic enthusiasm than that which occurred when the author of *Leonidas* (Glover) made one of a party of literati, assembled at the house of Mr. Gilbert West, at Wickham. Lord Lyttelton, on opening his window one morning, perceived Glover pacing to and fro with his whip in his hand by the side of a fine bed of tulips just ready to blow, and which were the peculiar care of the lady of the mansion, who worshipped Flora with as much ardour as Glover did the Muses. His mind was at the instant teeming with the birth of some little ballad, when Lord Lyttelton, to his astonishment and dismay, perceived him applying his whip with great vehemence to the stalks of the unfortunate tulips; all of which, before there was time to awaken him from his reverie, he had completely levelled with the ground; and when the devastation he had committed was afterwards pointed out to him, he was so perfectly unconscious of the proceeding, that he could with difficulty be made to believe it."

It seems that while she was building the little cottage that was to furnish her with a peaceful retreat from the noise and bustle of society both in London and Bristol, Hannah was already beginning also gradually to narrow her circle of acquaintances in order that her time might be less engrossed with social duties. She had no thought, however, of giving up her winters in London with Mrs. Garrick, and all her inner circle of friends retained their place in her heart.

In February 1786 we find Hannah with Mrs. Garrick at the Adelphi, and complaining to her sisters of the intense cold, which makes her prefer siting over a great

fire and reading Cowper to doing anything else. She writes: "I am enchanted with this poet—his images are so natural and so much his own. Such an original and philosophic thinker! such genuine Christianity! and such divine simplicity! but very rambling, and the order not very lucid. He seems to put down every thought as it arises, and never to retrench or alter anything."

It was in this spring that Hannah at last published her *Bas Bleu*, and with it a new poem called *Florio*, which last was probably the first fruit of her pen after her removal to Cowslip Green. *Florio*, which is dedicated to Horace Walpole, is a metrical tale. It is the story of a very ordinary young man of rank and fortune who, though he has no serious vice, greatly enjoys a gay town life. His father on his death-bed enjoins him to visit his great friend Sir Gilbert, who lives in retirement on his estate in the country, and has a lovely daughter named Celia. Florio's father wishes him to marry Celia. Six months after his father's death, Florio reluctantly prepares to carry out his father's wish. He pays a visit to Sir Gilbert, and is charmed with Celia, but soon finds that the quiet life of the country bores him to death. At the first excuse he rushes back to town. But now, when he throws himself into all the gay doings as formerly, he finds he has lost his taste for the silly vanities and follies that had such an attraction for him. The hollowness, and in some cases the wickedness, of the life he had formerly led, and the misery to which it brought some of his companions, at last appears to him in its true light, and once more his thoughts are with the lovely Celia in her peaceful country home. Gradually a longing for that simple home and its inmates impels him to take another journey to the home of his father's old friend. He receives as before a hearty welcome, and in due course is betrothed to and marries the lady of his father's choice.

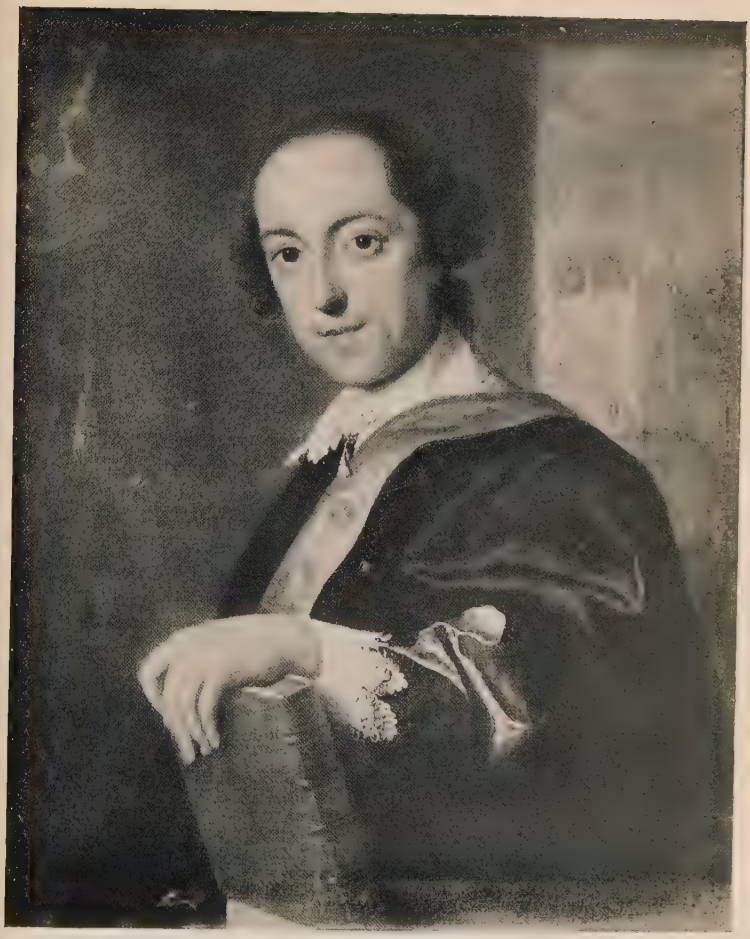
The character of Celia appears to women of the twentieth century somewhat colourless and insipid, but it is to her silent and modest charms, nevertheless, that are ascribed all the changes for the better that take place in Florio's character. He becomes a model country gentleman—

> "In either case, 'tis still the wife
> Gives cast and colour to the life.
> Florio, escaped from fashion's school,
> His heart and conduct learns to rule;
> Conscience his useful life approves;
> He serves his God, his country loves;
> Reveres her laws, protects her rights,
> And, for her interests, pleads or fights;
> Reviews with scorn his former life,
> And for his rescue thanks his wife."

To most readers *Florio* would probably be the least attractive of all Hannah More's minor pieces, but it has nevertheless an interest for the student of our poetess's character who wishes to follow her through all the progressive stages of her mental development, and to trace the many influences that were brought to bear upon her at the various stages of her long and full life. *Florio* was written at a point when the simple life of a peaceful country home was the one thing she sighed for, and when she was feeling heartily sick of the superficial pleasures of worldly gaiety.

In her dedication of this poem to Horace Walpole Hannah says she fears that it will not impress the world with a very favourable idea of her metrical powers, and adds: "But I shall at least be suspected of having some taste, and of keeping good company, when I confess that some of the pleasantest hours of my life have been passed in your conversation. I should be unjust to your very engaging and well-bred turn of wit if I did not declare that, among all the lively and brilliant things I have heard from you, I do not remember ever to have heard an unkind or an ungenerous one." This dedication

is dated January 27, 1786: it is interesting to read it in the light of all that posterity has learned to think and say about the character of this remarkable man. Some writers have mentioned Horace Walpole's friendship for Hannah More as if it were to be ranked among the indications of a gradual softening of the brain through old age, the senile infatuation of an effeminate old man for a handsome young woman. Had he preferred the company of a set of ballet dancers to that of these brilliant, intellectual women, there is no doubt but that some of his biographers and critics would have judged him more favourably. As it is, they entirely overlook the fact that he was quite as fond of a conversation with Elizabeth Carter, who was the same age as himself, as he was the more youthful Hannah More. He corresponded with Hannah More for more than twenty years, and during the last six years of their friendship she was past fifty. Sydney Smith said that Horace Walpole's wit was the best wit ever published in the shape of letters. Surely the high value placed upon those letters by the most competent critics of the twentieth century reflects very favourably on the judgment of a friend and contemporary like Hannah More. Time, the only true test of worth, has proved how wonderfully correct were Hannah More's opinions of men and books. Rarely indeed do we find a word of praise or blame in her most unguarded letters that has not been amply justified by later generations. As for the moral character of Horace Walpole, it was probably no worse than that of many men who have shown themselves to the world in a more favourable light. We know that some of his greatest friends lived long enough to be rather shocked at the contents of those letters of which he had himself left fair copies ready for publication. Macaulay in his scathing essay upon him remarks that "scarcely any writer has troubled himself so much about the appearance his works were to make before posterity." And even this critic admits



HORACE WALPOLE

From the portrait by John Giles Eccardt

that Walpole's writings have real merit, and merit of a very rare, though not a very high kind. Leslie, a nineteenth-century R.A., remarks that those who wish to study the art of Sir Joshua Reynolds cannot do better than begin with a course of Horace Walpole's Letters, and indeed they are a most valuable contribution to the history of our nation as well as of our art.

Long after Horace Walpole and Hannah More had ceased to walk this earth, persons were found who were only too ready to vilify the character of the former, and to charge the latter with hypocrisy and inconsistency, simply because she was his friend. Even Roberts, in a preface to the third edition of Hannah More's biography, finds it incumbent on him to make some excuse for this friendship. There were some people, he tells the reader, who thought he ought not to have published Hannah's letters to Walpole. His candour alone prevented him from repressing them ; he adds, however : " But let it not be forgotten, that so awed was this libertine in sentiment by the dignity and purity of Mrs. More's character and demeanour, that none of those gross or profane allusions which form such a large proportion of his worthless correspondence with his other friends, found their way into any of his letters to that lady." He concludes with remarking, " I will admit, however, that this part of her conduct involves a certain degree of inconsistency, but where does perfect consistency prevail, except among the spirits of the just before the throne ? "

This was the year in which poor Fanny Burney entered upon her " court bondage." Had she chosen to retire like Hannah More to a quiet country cottage, who knows what treasures she might not have added to our literature during those years which she so foolishly wasted in dressing and undressing the Queen. As for Horace Walpole, if Macaulay was correct in saying that his greatest wish was to be a celebrated author and an idle gentleman, that wish was certainly fulfilled, for in the

twentieth century there will be found none so bold as to declare that Horace Walpole is not in his way a celebrated author. He was not the first to choose the epistolary style, to the exclusion of all others. Many years after her friend's death Hannah More wrote : " Of this species of writing the authors of the Epistles of the New Testament have most judiciously availed themselves." She points out that one great advantage of the epistolary style is its not being subject to " the general laws of composition, and its admitting of every diversity of miscellaneous matter. The epistolary form," she continues. " has also other advantages ; it not only admits of a variety of subjects, but of the most abrupt transition from one subject to another, however dissimilar. It requires not the connecting links of argumentative composition, not the regularity of historical, nor the uniformity of ethical ; not the methodical arrangement of each and all of these. The free mind, unfettered by rules, expatiates at will, soars or sinks, skims or dives, as the objects of its attention may be elevated or depressed, profound or superficial." [1]

It would have added greatly to the interest of his work if Roberts could have inserted Horace Walpole's letters to Hannah More as well as hers to him. The correspondence between two such interesting personalities could not fail to be of great value to students of character. But this conscientious biographer would, no doubt, have been greatly shocked at the bare suggestion of such a course. Pinkerton, a contemporary of Walpole's, who knew him well, says that his style was so graceful that even fragments of it became valuable, even in his day. The common belief that Walpole showed a weak preference for everything that was aristocratic, and that he invariably placed social rank higher than intellectual merit, probably originated in the spiteful remarks of some contemporary who thought himself slighted. It was certainly not high

[1] See her *Essays on the Writings of St. Paul.*

birth that attracted him to Hannah More. "The Whig aristocracy," says Pinkerton, to which Horace Walpole belonged, "never yielded to the Tory aristocracy in its claims of family pride and ambition; the favourite idol, Power, was equally adored by both, the radical difference was—on which pedestal to place it—on popular liberty or popular slavery. Walpole was a firm and steady supporter of the cause of freedom till the French Revolution, or 'subversion,' as Gibbon called it, shook and embroiled all the former opinions of mankind."

Horace Walpole was always of the opinion that a monarch was necessary to public freedom, and he upheld the doctrine that *nunquam gratior libertas quam sub rege pio*. He read Burke's *Reflexions on the French Revolution* with the greatest enthusiasm, and his remarks upon it in his letters are well worth our attention.

But, after all, when we come to sum up the character of Horace Walpole, we are surprised, not that he did so little, and played so insignificant a part in the life of his day, but that, with his wealth, his aristocratic connections, and his many hobbies, he did so much, and left so much that is of real value behind him. How rarely, indeed, do we find a man of his position in the world adding anything of real value to art or literature. Opulence has almost always a stifling effect upon real genius; it chokes it more surely even than poverty, whatever socialists may affirm to the contrary. "The opulent," says Pinkerton, "rarely possess a warm and decided taste for the arts, and far less for literary honours; the gulf of dissipation—the oblivion, not the enjoyment of life—lies between them and this paradise." To this paradise, however, Walpole was admitted.

Horace Walpole's treatment of Hannah More's religious scruples and her Evangelical views, as seen in his correspondence, deserves our attention; so also do her attempts to bring him into contact with persons of her way of thinking.

In April 1786 Hannah wrote to her sisters from London: "Mrs. Piozzi's book is much in fashion" (Mrs. Thrale's name after her second marriage). "It is indeed entertaining; but there are two or three passages exceedingly unkind to Garrick, which filled me with indignation. If Johnson had been envious enough to utter them, she might have been prudent enough to suppress them. Johnson, with all his genius, had no taste for Garrick's acting; and with all his virtues, was envious of his riches; this led him very unjustly to say severe things, to which Garrick not unfrequently retorted: but why must these things be recorded? The speaker, perhaps, had forgotten them, or was sorry for them, or did not mean them; but this new-fashioned biography seems to value itself upon perpetuating everything that is injurious and detracting. I perfectly recollect the candid answer Garrick once made to my inquiry why Johnson was so often harsh and unkind in his speeches both to and of him. 'Why, Nine,' he replied, 'it is very natural; is it not to be expected he should be angry, that I, who have so much less merit than he, should have had so much greater success?'"

Garrick was much younger than Johnson, and had been his pupil in their little school. This feeling of Johnson's was very human. Max O'Rell, in one of his books, complains that the rising man never gets encouragement from those who surrounded him at the beginning of his upward career. Whenever he does anything creditable, they say complacently that it is only John who has done it, and it is to strangers that John must turn for the praise that is to encourage him to further effort. The fact is, the persons with whom a man began life do not like to feel that one who started in the race on an equal footing and under the same conditions as themselves has outstripped them in the race. It seems to reflect on themselves disadvantageously that he should have left them behind, and as they cannot

keep pace with him, they grasp after him, to keep him with them if possible rather than add by their praises to the gap that is widening between him and them.

A few days later Hannah writes: "It was my lot the other day at dinner to sit between two travellers, famous for making geography their whole subject: the one is as fond of talking of the east, as the other is of the north; the former poured the Ganges into one of my ears, and the latter the Danube into the other, and the confluence of these two mighty rivers deluged all my ideas, till I did not know what they were talking about, especially as I like *things* much better than *words*."

We now find her speaking earnestly of religion to some of the most worldly of her acquaintances; recommending Doddridge to Lady B——, and pleading with Miss A—— "beautiful and accomplished; surrounded with flatterers and sunk in dissipation. I asked her why she continued to live so much below, not only her principles, but her understanding—what pleasure she derived from crowds of persons so inferior to herself—did it make her happy? 'Happy!' she said. 'No, she was miserable, She despised the society she lived in, and had no enjoyment of the pleasures in which her life was consumed; but what could she do? She could not be singular; she must do as her acquaintance did.' I pushed it so home to her conscience that she wept bitterly, and embraced me. I conjured her to read her Bible, with which she is utterly unacquainted."

On May 10 Hannah tells her sisters that Sir Joshua is busy painting a picture for the Empress of Russia; Catherine has left the subject to him, and he has chosen the young Hercules struggling with the serpents; though Horace Walpole had suggested he should do the scene at Deptford, where the Czar Peter is receiving a ship's carpenter's dress in exchange for his own, that he may work in the dock. This picture of Hercules is the one of which Reynolds said, when it was finished, that there

were five pictures under it, meaning that he had expended upon it the work of five, improving and improving till he was at length satisfied.

In the same letter the traveller Swinburne and his wife are mentioned. They live chiefly abroad, and are Roman Catholics. Hannah finds the lady the most agreeable of the two. "She is the great friend of the Queen of Naples, and not less a favourite of the Queen of France—a singular pair of friendships for an English-woman of no rank."

Hannah's interest in the slavery question is greatly deepened at this time by her intercourse with Lady Midleton, of whom she writes: "Her kindness, which you would think must needs be exhausted on the negroes, extends to the sufferings of every animal." This lady was, as we have seen, the first person to enlist William Wilberforce's sympathies in the cause of the negroes. Wilberforce was, when Hannah More wrote the above letter, already a member of Parliament, and had reached his twenty-seventh year. His biographers tell us that he had spent his early years with a Methodist aunt, and had imbibed many of her religious ideas. When, a few years later, as grandson to one of the leading residents in Hull, he was made much of by a comparatively worldly circle of relatives and friends, it was only by dint almost of force that they could persuade him to go to see a play. In 1785 he had been attracted by the preaching of the Rev. J. Newton, and had privately consulted that remarkable divine on the state of his religious feelings. Mr. Newton's advice to him was that he should not hastily form new connections, nor widely separate himself from his former friends. From this time Wilberforce sought to associate himself with a more religious circle of friends, and among some of the new friends to whom he was now introduced were Hannah More and her sisters. It is a curious thing that the man to influence Wilberforce perhaps more greatly than any other at

this turning-point in his life should himself have been for years a captain of a slave-trading ship. It would be difficult to find a more extraordinary life-history than that of this Mr. Newton. When Wilberforce went to him for advice he was one of the most popular preachers in London, and held the living of St. Mary Woolnoth. It must have been about the same time that some friends took Hannah More to hear him preach. Hannah More had been deeply influenced several years earlier by his book *Cardephonia*, and now, like Wilberforce, on becoming personally acquainted with him she seems to have turned to him as a spiritual adviser, and a helper towards that narrower and stricter religious life that she too was resolved to lead in the future.

Mr. Newton was born in the year 1725. He was the son of an irreligious sea-captain with a pious Dissenting wife. From his mother the boy received instruction in religion till he lost her when in his eighth year. His father married again, a woman without any religion. On his eleventh birthday the boy was taken on his first voyage in his father's ship. He made four subsequent voyages with his father. In the course of the last one, his father left him for some months under the care of a friend at Alicante in Spain. He says in his autobiography that at this time he was very wicked and very foolish, and that his evil propensities gathered strength by habit. His life for many years after this was one long story of voyages, storms encountered, and wicked actions followed by fits of repentance and returns to his former evil ways. He says, of a period spent in Sierra Leone: "I not only sinned with a high hand myself, but made it my study to tempt and seduce others upon every occasion. Nay, I eagerly sought occasion, sometimes to my own hazard and hurt." By this wicked conduct he forfeited the favour of his captain. When the captain died and was succeeded in command by the first mate, Newton left the ship, being afraid the

new captain would put him on board a man-of-war, which would have been worse than death itself. He now found himself upon the African coast in a spot where there were but a few white men, and these were all engaged in buying and selling slaves. Newton entered the service of one of these traders. For nearly two years he lived with these men, and he speaks of himself during that time as one who was " big with mischief and infected with pestilence, and capable of spreading a taint (of sin) wherever I went. But the Lord wisely placed me where I could do little harm. The few I had to converse with were too much like myself, and I was soon brought into such abject circumstances that I was too low to have any influence. I was rather shunned and despised than imitated, there being few, even of the negroes themselves, during the first year of my residence, but thought themselves too good to speak to me."

During those two years on the African coast Newton reached as low a state of degradation as it was possible for an Englishman to reach. The negress with whom his master lived was very cruel to him, and, withholding food from him, drove him to such a state of hunger that he went out and grubbed up the roots in the garden to save him from starvation. During the rainy season his dress consisted of a shirt, a pair of trousers, and a cotton handkerchief, and thus accoutred he was exposed for a period of twenty and often even forty hours to incessant rain and strong gales of wind, without the least shelter, and he occasionally felt, to the end of his days, the pains he had then contracted. It is no wonder that a long illness soon broke both his constitution and his spirits. Yet, extraordinary to relate, he was able at intervals during that dreadful time to refresh his mind with mathematical studies. " Having bought Burrow's *Euclid* at Plymouth, and it being the only book I had brought ashore with me," he says, " I used to take it to a remote corner of the island, and draw diagrams with a stick

upon the sand." In this way he made himself master of the first six books of *Euclid*. So pitiable an object did he at this time present that when a ship hove in sight he would hide himself in the woods from pure shame. He had written several times to his father describing his condition, and his father had applied to a ship's captain who was setting out on a voyage to Gambia and Sierra Leone. Meanwhile Newton had got himself transferred to another master who owned several factories, and sent him to another of the islands. "Here," he says, "I began to be wretch enough to think myself happy. It was a significant phrase in those parts that such and such a one had grown black, not in complexion but disposition. I have known," he continues, "several who after the age of thirty have adopted the customs and ceremonies of the natives, and come to prefer that country to England. A part of this spirit of infatuation was growing upon me."

One of the remarkable effects that custom has upon human nature, Addison tells us, is its wonderful efficiency in making everything pleasant to us, and he urges his readers to listen rather to the voice of reason than that of inclination, for we may possibly bring our inclination to agree with our reason, but we can never force reason to comply with inclination. At the very moment that Newton was becoming contented with his degradation, a ship had orders to bring him home. In February 1747 his fellow-servant, seeing a vessel sailing by, made a fire on the beach in token that there was trade to be done with the island. The ship anchored, and he went on board in a canoe. The captain at once inquired after Newton.

"Had this invitation to return home come when I was starving at Plantanes," says Newton, "I should have received it as life from the dead, but now, for the reasons already given, I received it with indifference. The captain, in order to entice him to return to England,

told Newton that a relation had died and left him an estate and a large packet of letters, and promised that if he would return he should have share of his cabin and dine at his table, and be his companion without being liable to service. The story of the relative was entirely false, but the bait took, and Newton set out for his native country at an hour's notice, after having been in captivity for some fifteen months. When he talked of his former wicked ways, the captain began to look upon him as a sort of Jonah, who would be attended by a curse wherever he went. Newton confesses that at this time he was a victim to every vice except drink, and that the crew, finding this out, conspired to make him dead drunk against his will, with the result that he ran a narrow escape of being drowned by falling overboard in his intoxication. Among the few books on board was Stanhope's *Thomas à Kempis*. This he took up carelessly and began to read. "What if these things be true?" was the thought that crossed his mind as he went to his berth that night. A storm arose that very night, the ship, which was greatly out of repair, soon appeared to be sinking; while they were at the pumps, one of the crew was washed overboard. The cargo being a light one (beeswax and wood), the ship escaped destruction; Newton was at the pumps for four hours at a stretch, and so fatigued that he lay down utterly exhausted and quite indifferent as to his fate, but gradually as the thought of death came over him he became much frightened. "I began," he says, "to think of that Jesus whom I had so often derided." The words of Scripture that his mother had taught him before he was seven years old now came crowding back into his memory. When the storm subsided, his first thought was to read the Bible. . . . He relates that one of the things that helped him at this stage was the assurance he found in the sacred pages that God's Spirit would be given to those who asked for it. During

the remainder of that voyage Newton spent all his spare time in reading the Scriptures. Another book that now fell into his hands was *Beveridge's Sermons*. These he studied carefully, and eventually he became satisfied that the truth of the Gospel was suited even to the need of such a desperate character as himself. He renounced his evil ways, gave up swearing, and began to live a different life. He never saw his father again, for he was drowned while bathing in the Hudson, in America. "Few, very few," says Newton of himself, "have recovered from so dreadful a state." He now went on another voyage, on which his business was to sail in the long-boat and purchase slaves. This work took him back to Plantanes, where he was now courted by those who had formerly despised him; his easy circumstances tempted him to return to his evil ways, but very soon a violent fever into which he was thrown again awakened his better feelings.

On the voyage home Newton spent every odd moment in learning Latin. He worked so hard that he generally had a passage fixed in his memory before he understood its meaning. On his arrival in England he visited relations in Kent, and married a cousin whom he had seen and admired seven years before. After this, according to his own statement, he again became cold to religion. Being ordered on another voyage, the thought of having to separate from his wife for so many months roused him again to serious reflections. In August 1750 he sailed from Liverpool as commander of a good ship, with thirty persons under him. He endeavoured to treat them with humanity, and set a good example; holding the Church of England service twice every Sunday. He went on with his study of Latin during this voyage, having provided himself with a dictionary and copies of Cæsar and Livy. Before the end of the voyage he could read Livy as easily as English. The voyage lasted fourteen months, and was in connection

with the slave trade. Several other voyages followed this one, and then he resigned his command. By this time he had also mastered Greek and Hebrew, also without the aid of any teacher. He now decided to enter the ministry, but when his friends asked the Archbishop of York to ordain him, that dignitary gently but firmly refused to do so, probably because Newton had no college training. Newton then became a tide-surveyor in Liverpool, and had fifty or sixty persons under him in this work. He still continued, however, to prepare for Holy Orders, and at length, in 1764, through the influence of Christian friends, the curacy of Olney was offered him by Mr. Thornton, and he was ordained by Dr. Green, Bishop of Lincoln, at Buckden. It was during this curacy, which he held for sixteen years, that he was the intimate friend of the poet Cowper, over whose life, as over that of William Wilberforce and Hannah More, he was destined to have so great an influence. After sixteen years of useful work at Olney, Mr. Thornton offered him the living of St. Mary. Mr. Thornton was a wealthy London merchant, and one of the first promoters of the movement for the abolition of slavery, and it was probably through her acquaintance with him that Hannah More was led to attend St. Mary Woolnoth's while spending her winters in town with Mrs. Garrick.

At St. Mary's Mr. Newton preached shorter sermons on Sunday mornings than at other times, because, he would say, there were several bankers in his congregation, and "The fowler must go cautiously to meet shy birds."

He continued to preach twice every Sunday till he had reached the age of eighty. He published several volumes of sermons, one of which was written before he was ordained. His *Review of Ecclesiastical History* was considered very good as far as it went, and it was the book which excited Milner to undertake a more com-

plete work in that direction. He also published a volume entitled *Letters to a Wife*. He was in the habit of saying that he had no temptation to meddle with politics, for "when a ship is leaky and a mutinous spirit divides the company on board, a wise man would leave the debate and go to the pumps." He used to say, "I see in this world two heaps, one of human happiness and one of human misfortune, and if I can take the smallest bit from one heap and add it to the other I carry a point." He was remarkable for his terse sayings, and many of them have been recorded, such, for instance, as:

"The post of honour in an army is not with the baggage, nor with the women."

"If my wife is willing to deliver the reins when I ask for them, I shall always be willing to let her drive."

"If a Christian is but a shoe-cleaner, he should be the best in his parish."

"A man always in society is always on the spend."

The influence that he had upon the hypochondriacal Cowper while that poet resided under his roof has been thought by some to have had a tendency to heighten the poor fellow's inclination to melancholy, and it is certain that when he wrote a preface to a volume of Cowper's poems the publishers begged him to withdraw it lest it should act as a damper on the sale of the work. Mr. Newton tells this to Hannah More in one of his letters. It contained a tactless allusion to the poet's insanity.

We read in the Life of Lord Macaulay that, when the latter's father Zachary was a young man, the religious world still allowed the maintenance of slavery to continue an open question, and that John Newton, the real founder of that school in the Church of England, of which in after years Zachary was a devoted member, contrived to reconcile the business of a slave-trader with the duties of a Christian, and to the end of his days gave scandal to some of his disciples, who by that time were

one and all sworn abolitionists, by his supposed reluctance to see that there could be no fellowship between light and darkness. But Mr. Newton's letters to Hannah More amply prove that this statement is incorrect. Newton was an ardent abolitionist throughout his later life.

In an undated letter written from Cowslip Green in the summer of 1786, Hannah More wrote to Mrs. Boscawen : " You will be glad to hear that I am comfortably established in my little cottage. It is a pleasant wild place, and I am growing a prodigious gardener, and make up by my industry for my want of science. I work in it two or three hours every day, and by the time the hour of visiting arrives, for even I have my visitors in this little corner, I am vastly glad of a pretence for sitting down." She then informs her friend that she has just received a copy of a German translation of *Sacred Dramas*, sent her from some unknown person in Germany, " with many pretty cuts of the principal scenes, neatly engraved."

When Hannah came up to London that year to spend the winter with Mrs. Garrick as usual, Mrs. Boscawen made an arrangement with Opie to paint Hannah's portrait, and in writing to tell her the hours arranged for her to sit for it that lady said : " I will call on you, and attend you, and read to you there to cheat the weary hour. . . . I promise you never to lend my picture to be engraved unless you order me. It is certainly worthy of Sir Joshua Reynolds' superior skill ; but I can command Opie, and make him alter, or even *refaire*, if we do not like it."

To this letter Hannah replied that she would comply with her friend's request, but that she had such a repugnance to having her picture taken that no motive but her friend's wish could induce her to sit, and she jokes Mrs. Boscawen about wishing to send her down to posterity by the only conveyance by which she can ever expect to reach it.

Hannah tells her friend that she has been enjoying Madame de Sevigné's letters, "which show the hand of a master, but of a master sketching for his amusement and not for publication. This rage for finishing," she adds, "may produce great essays and fine orations, but it makes frigid letters. For this reason I think Voltaire's letters are in bad taste; he always intends to be brilliant, and therefore is almost always affected —every passage seems written in the very best manner. Now to me the epistolary style is what it ought to be, when the writer, by a happy and becoming negligence, has the art of making you believe that he could write a great deal better if he would, but that he has too much judgment to use great exertions on small occasions—he will not draw Ulysses' bow to shoot at a pigeon."

In March 1787 Hannah More sent her sisters the following anecdote, which she had heard at a party at Lady Amherst's: "Just before Sir Joseph Yorke came home from Holland, he was at dinner one day at the Prince of Orange's, where was the Duc de Chartres, who took it into his head to ridicule the English Ambassador. Finding that Sir Joseph did not laugh at any of his jokes, '*Quoi Monsieur,*' said he, '*est-ce que vous ne riez jamais?*' '*Rarement, Monsieur,*' replied Sir Joseph with great coolness. Just at that time the combined French and Spanish fleets were in the British Channel—a new subject for the jokes of the French prince. '*Mais, Monsieur,*' said he again, turning to Sir Joseph, '*si notre flotte attachuerait l'Angleterre?*' '*Alors, Monsieur, je virois,*' said Sir Joseph."

CHAPTER XVIII

THE MANNERS OF THE GREAT

Some years before the date of which we are now treating, Hannah More had made her sister Pattie a present of the copyright of her first dramatic production, *The Search after Happiness*. During this winter (1787) we find her writing, "I believe Pattie will be a great fortune at last, for the ninth edition of my present to her—*The Search After Happiness*—is gone to the press. I am really shocked at the public taste, which has taken off ten thousand copies of a poem which I have not patience to read."

In this chatty letter she continues, "One day last week I met at dinner Mrs. Siddons; she is a very fine woman. I never saw her before." This great actress had begun to come before the public in the very year in which Garrick died. She goes on: "I spent yesterday a sober quiet day at Lady Amherst's and read Shakespeare to my lord till eleven o'clock at night. . . . Lady Amherst has great credit in the education of her young folks."

Hannah has had a long visit from Mrs. Trimmer, and says of her, "She is the author whom I venture most to recommend. I made one lady take three dozen of her books yesterday. I presumed to give her a good deal of wholesome advice about booksellers; for would you believe it, popular as I am persuaded she must be, she has got little or nothing by her writings, except reputation and the consciousness of doing good—two things on which, though I set all due value, yet where there are ten children money must have the eleventh place in maternal consideration."

It was during this spring that *Percy* was brought for a second time before the public. Mrs. Siddons took the part of Elwina, and the play had a run of some eight nights. Hannah resolutely refused to go and see it. She had by this time made her resolve to give up theatre-going; and it is evident that she had parted with the copyright, and had now no control over its production. She writes to her sisters, "Mr. Pepys told me he had a great struggle whether to come to us or to go to *Percy*. At last he concluded to give up the child for the sake of the mother. They were astonished at my not being there. I told them as I had been able to resist Shakespeare so many years, there was no great philosophy in withstanding the poet of that night. The next day I had another attack. I dined with Sir Joshua, Mr. Burke, and two or three others of that stamp. They cried all at once, 'Were you not delighted with Mrs. Siddons last night in *Percy!*' I replied, 'No, for I did not see her.' They would not believe me guilty of such insensibility, adding, 'She did it exquisitely, as the tears of Mr. Fox, who sat with us, testified." On the very day she wrote the above Hannah had been to the city to hear Mr. Newton preach, and had afterwards sat an hour with him, and come home with two packets of sermons. These facts are in themselves so eloquent that no words need be added to them to show the reader what was the state of Hannah's mind at this juncture. A few days later she was at a magnificent assembly at Lady Amherst's, and wrote to her sisters, "Dull and foolish as assemblies are, yet it is diverting to see them once or twice in a year. A noble suite of rooms, filled with four hundred persons of the first rank, dressed in all the vanity of which the present fantastic fashions allow; but alas! the eye is soon satisfied with seeing, and the ear has nothing to hear worth hearing. The Duke and Duchess of Cumberland came early, but the Prince of Wales did not arrive till near midnight. He

was as usual all gaiety and gracefulness. He did me the honour to ask for me, and to tell me that he had often wished to see me.

In April Hannah wrote to her sisters, "I spent a day at Lady Aylesbury's. In the evening there was a concert. It was quite *le temple des beaux arts*. Lady Aylesbury works portraits as Raphael paints them, and there was Mrs. Damer to remind us of her famous dogs of exquisite sculpture, and there was my Lord Derby to talk about his company of Richmond House comedians (you know Lady Aylesbury is the Duchess of Richmond's mother); for it was he who gave us the concert, in which he was the principal performer; and there was General Conway, poet to the ducal theatre. It would have made some of the old nobility stare to have seen so many great personages descended from them, degenerated (as their noble pride would have called it) into geniuses, actors, artists and poets. Real talent, however, never degrades."

On May 10th Mrs. Trimmer wrote to Hannah expressing a wish that a second volume of her *Sacred Dramas* might soon be forthcoming. "Indeed, my dear madam," she added, "you should go on with them; they are so extremely engaging to young minds, and the sentiments so agreeable to Scripture, that they cannot fail of producing the happiest effects. You know that I read the sacred volume frequently; I may truly say that it is my highest entertainment to do so, and I can assure you that your *Sacred Dramas* excite in my mind the same kind of devotional feeling as the Scriptures themselves." It must be remembered that Mrs. Trimmer was the lady who afterwards shared, with Hannah More and Robert Raikes, the fame of being one of the original promoters of the Sunday-school movement, besides having been the most popular writer of children's stories of her day.

The first letter from Mr. Newton to Hannah is dated

May 11th of this year (1787), and in it he says: "Mrs. Newton and I judge that if you and we were so situated, as that our present slight acquaintance could be cultivated by frequent interviews, you would soon be very dear to us. And it is to this letter that he adds the postscript, "I wrote a preface to the first volume of Cowper's Poems. His name was not then known among booksellers; and they were afraid to bind up my preface with the book, lest it should operate like a death's head at a feast, and by its gravity hinder the sale it was designed to recommend, but I am not afraid to send you a copy." [1]

On May 31st, when recovering from a "little sickness," as she terms it, Hannah wrote to her new friend: "I am thoroughly persuaded of the necessity of seeing and acknowledging the hand of Providence in the smaller as well as in the greater events of life; but I want more of the practical persuasion of this great truth. Pray for me, my good sir, that I may be enabled to obtain more firmness of mind, a more submissive spirit, and more preparedness, not only for death itself, but for the common evils of life."

On June 9th Hannah returned to her thatched cottage —to Cowslip Green. Her first letter from thence is to Elizabeth Carter, and tells of the appointment of her friend Dr. Porteus to the See of London. I rejoice for many reasons, she adds, "but for none more than that his ecclesiastical jurisdiction, extending to the West Indies, will make him of infinite usefulness in the great object I have so much at heart—the project to abolish the slave trade in Africa; the young gentleman who has embarked on it with the zeal of an apostle has been much with me (Wilberforce) and engaged all my little interest and all my affections in it. It is to be brought before Parliament in the spring. Above one hundred

[1] This was the preface in which he had alluded to Cowper's fits of insanity."

members have promised their votes. My dear friend, be sure to canvas everybody who has a heart. It is a subject too ample for a letter, and I shall have a great deal to say to you on it when we meet. To my feelings it is the most interesting subject which was ever discussed in the annals of humanity." It was also in this month that Hannah wrote a long letter to Horace Walpole, from which we give the following extract, because it throws a more pleasing light upon his character than is generally given to it by his biographers. "Mrs. Carter and I have a thousand times agreed that your wit was by no means the cause of our esteem for you, because you cannot help having it if you would; and I never in my life could be attached to any one for their wit, if wit was the best thing they had. It is an established maxim with me that the truest objects of warm attachment are the small parts of great characters. I never considered the patriotic Brutus with any delight as the asserter of freedom, and as 'refulgent from the stroke of Cæsar's fate;' no, it is the gentle, compassionate Brutus that engages my affection, who refused to disturb the slumbers of the poor boy who attended him in that anxious night when he destroyed himself and so much needed his services. So when I sit in the little hermitage I have built in my garden, not to be melancholy in, but to think upon my friends, and to read their works and their letters, Mr. Walpole seldomer presents himself to my mind as the man of wit than as the tender-hearted and humane friend of my dear infirm, broken-spirited Mrs. Vesey." Mrs. Vesey had become a confirmed invalid shortly before this, and her brilliant intellect, worn out with old age, had now become quite clouded. There is a pathetic account of her last days in the memoirs of Elizabeth Carter, who, like Horace Walpole, was devoted to her to the end.

Horace Walpole, in his reply, dated June 15th, has a few words to say about Fanny Burney: "The first

time I saw her (Mrs. Vesey) Miss Burney passed the evening there looking quite recovered and well, and so cheerful and agreeable that the court seems only to have improved the ease of her manner, instead of stamping more reserve on it, as I feared; but what slight graces it can give will not compensate to us and the world for the loss of her company and her writings; not but that some young ladies that can write can stifle their talent so much as if they were under lock and key in the royal library. I do not see but a cottage is as pernicious to genius as the queen's waiting-room. Why should one remember people that forget themselves?"

In the same letter Horace Walpole says: "You did me the honour of asking me for my *Castle of Otranto* for your library at Cowslip Green. May I, as a printer, rather than as an author, beg leave to furnish part of a shelf there? and as I must fetch some of the books from Strawberry Hill, will you wait till I can send them all together?"

A few weeks later Hannah writes to him: "She (the milkwoman) has just brought out another book, which you may possess for five shillings, and which she has advertised to be quite free from *my* corruptions. What is curious, she has prefixed to it my original preface to her first book, and twenty pages of the scurrility published against me in her second. To all this she has added the deed which I got drawn up by an eminent lawyer, to secure her money in the funds, and which she asserts I made Mrs. Montagu sign without reading. Do, dear sir, join me in sincerest compassion without one atom of resentment, for that I solemnly protest is the state of my mind towards her, for a human heart of such unaccountable depravity, as to harbour such deep malice for two years, though she has gained her point and the money is settled to her wish. If I wanted to punish an enemy, it should be by fastening on him the trouble of constantly hating somebody."

Again, in London in the winter of 1787 Hannah writes to her sisters that Mr. Wilberforce has told the House he should bring in a bill after the holidays for the abolition of the Slave Trade, and that Mr. Fox went up to him and told him he should heartily concur with him in that measure; that he had thought of bringing in such a bill himself, but was very glad it was in so much better hands." She has spent a whole day at the Midletons, a day entirely given up to negro business and from which all other company was excluded. How little Wilberforce and these ardent helpers in his cause dreamed that they had got to work unceasingly for twenty years before Heaven would allow them to accomplish their object. The Abolition Bill was not passed until the year 1807.

The first months of quiet leisure passed by Hannah at Cowslip Green were devoted to the preparation of her little book entitled *Thoughts on the Manners of the Great*. It was addressed to the aristocracy, and headed by a line from Shakespeare—"You are the Makers of Manners." Roberts calls it "her first didactic work on morals," but in reality Hannah never took up her pen to write either poetry or prose without the wish, if not the intention, to write words that would tend to leave the world a little better than they found it. The work in question and the one which soon followed it, entitled *Estimate of the Religion of the Fashionable World*, were produced, in the words of her biographer, "at a time in which to decide between God and the flattering world by which she was surrounded, must have caused her something of that agony of resolution which on less solid ground others of her sex probably experience in passing from life and its endearments into the seclusion of the cloister a separation certainly more violent and rending, and more imposing as a spectacle of self-conquest."

During the dozen or more of gay London season through which we have been following our authoress

she had written very freely to her sisters, not only of what pleased or amused her, but also of certain things of which she strongly disapproved in the lives of some of her friends of rank and title; but many years before the close of her long life she went carefully through all her correspondence and destroyed all the paragraphs that she considered too private ever to be given to the world at large. In *Manners of the Great* she undertook to censure some of the minor failings of "those persons of rank or fortune who live within the restraints of moral obligation," to quote the words of her own preface written for an edition published nearly twenty years later. "The anonymous writer," she observes, "is not restrained from the strongest reprehension, and most pointed censure of existing errors, by the conscious apprehension that his own faults may be brought forward. And certainly for a woman of little more than forty to publish such a book under her own name would have been somewhat daring. The book appearing anonymously was wonderfully well received. The Bishop of London, to whom Hannah had sent proofs, wrote to her, "I am charmed with it, and am impatient to see it fn the hands of every man and woman of condition in London and Westminster." Hers were not the animadversions of the recluse, as Roberts remarks, but the censure of one who was courted and flattered and admired by the very people whose vices and follies she was about to reprove, and these too persons whom she was daily in the habit of meeting. "She could not be ignorant that this step might probably exclude her from those circles in which she had hitherto been so conspicuous and caressed; but the happiness of her friends was dearer to her than their favour."

Writing to her sister in the spring of 1788, Hannah says: "Fine people are ready to join you in reprobating vice, for they are not all vicious, but their standard of right is low; it is not the standard of the gospel. In

this little book I have not gone deep; it is but a superficial view of the subject. It is confined to prevailing practical evils. Should this succeed, I hope by the blessing of God another time to attack more strongly the principle.

Hannah tells her readers in the beginning that the thought of writing this book was suggested to her by reading the King's (George III.'s) recent proclamation against irreligion and immorality, and a note says that the book was written just after the formation of the society for enforcing that proclamation. Charlotte Yonge says of it (in 1888), "This treatise was well thought out, and the well-balanced sentences put to shame the careless slip-shod of our day." The first protest is against the prevailing disregard of the Sabbath day, against the custom of ladies' sending for their hairdressers on Sunday, and these she terms "an aggrieved body of men;" the next protest is against card-money, "a worm which is feeding on the vitals of domestic virtue." Card-money was the fee paid by the guests to the servants of their host for furnishing them with playing cards. Servants counted such perquisites as a part of their regular earnings, and the guests thus defrayed some of the expenses of their entertainment. This custom was one which must lead servants to aim at getting situations in the families where there was the most card-playing. If their own master refused to have card-parties on Sunday, they would try to get into a family where there was no such restriction. The better the servant, the less he earned. It was putting a premium on the most worthless ones. Another custom censure was that of letting the servant answer the door with the words "Not at home," when the master was in but did not wish to receive visitors. Our moralist remarks that even the conscientious think themselves obliged to concur in this practice. But "that ingenuity which could devise some effectual substitute for the daily and hourly lie of 'Not

at home' would deserve well of society." The expediency of the denial as such she does not question. It is only the untruth that is wrong. Here, again, it is the servants that are the sufferers, for they cannot distinguish our little niceties between a lie that is a lie and one that is not. "To hope that your servant will always lie for your convenience and never for his own is expecting more from human nature in a low and uncultivated state than we have any right to expect." In commenting on this part of the book Miss Yonge adds the fact that Wilberforce, when dismissing a servant for deceit, had been told by the man that "Not at home" had been his first lesson in the unimportance of truth, "coming as it did from so religious a person as his master."

The next practice inveighed against is that of having Sunday concerts. Calling it sacred music does not sanctify the diversion. The Fourth Commandment, in her estimation, is not a command to the Israelites alone, an institution belonging to a particular people and country, but a law that is binding on every individual who professes to be a Christian. Here, again, the most invincible objection is that a bad example is set to the lower classes. If your servants see you allowing yourself amusements on the Sabbath, will they not also look for their one amusement on that day?

"When a practice is neither good nor evil in itself, it is both discreet and generous to avoid it, if it can be attended with any possible danger to minds less enlightened, and to faith less confirmed." She wonders people do not abstain from their diversions one day in seven from a motive of human policy. "I am persuaded that this world would afford much more real satisfaction than it does, if we did not press, and torture, and strain it in order to make it yield what it does not contain. . . . Pleasure, like an over-fed lamp, is extinguished by the excess of its own aliment." The custom of fre-

quenting public walks and gardens on a Sunday next occupies her attention. "It is the perfidious property of certain pleasures, that though they seem not to have the smallest harm in themselves, they imperceptibly indispose the mind to everything that is good." She winds up her remarks on the subject of Sunday by observing that it has been the opinion of many wise men, that Christianity will stand or fall as this day is neglected or observed. "Sunday seems to be a kind of Christian Palladium; and the city of God will never be wholly taken by the enemy till the observance of that be quite lost."

Many wealthy persons comfort themselves with the soothing maxim that we are commanded not to be righteous over much. To this she answers, "Are our young men of fashion so very much led away by the fervours of piety, that they require to have their imagination tamed, and their ardours cooled by the freezing maxims of worldly wisdom?"

Another popular way of quieting the conscience is to reflect that there is no harm in such and such a practice. And of this habit she observes, "I am mistaken if more innocent persons do not inflame their spiritual reckoning by this treacherous apology than by almost any other means."

One alarming symptom of the degeneracy of morals is the calling of atrocious deeds by gentle names. "The substitution of the word *gallantry* for that crime which stabs domestic happiness and conjugal virtue is one of the most dangerous of all the modern abuses of language." She urges that this practice of softening the distinctions between right and wrong must certainly contribute more than anything to diminish the horror of vice in the rising generation. "Let us beware," she pleads, "of lowering the Standard of Right."

Our author has noticed the cruel sneer which worldly prudence bestows on active goodness, and the cool

derision it expresses at the defeat of a benevolent scheme. "Alas! there is little need of such discouragements. The world is a climate which too naturally chills a glowing generosity, and contracts an expanded heart."

There are only too many people who love to recount the instances of their unsuccessful attempts to do good. By so doing they often deter the inexperienced from running any generous hazards. "The liberal should be particularly cautious how they furnish the avaricious with creditable pretences for saving their money." We should not furnish arguments for the miserly to use as weapons in defence of their own purses.

With regard to those old people who, as age advances, are thought to be too careful of their money, our moralist remarks that this apparent uncharitableness is not always the effect of a heart naturally hardened. "Misanthropy is very often nothing but abused sensibility." "The milk of human kindness becomes soured by repeated acts of ingratitude."

With regard to those who have been disappointed in their charitable efforts, she says, "He who is once convinced that he is to assist his fellow-creatures because it is the will of God, . . . will soon get above all uneasiness, when the consequence does not answer his expectation."

There are some people who are ever ready to lend a helping hand to miseries that come directly under their notice, but forget that any calamity exists when it is out of their sight. "This is a mechanical charity, which requires springs and wheels to set it going." "Real Christian charity does not wait to be acted upon by impressions and impulses."

Some persons tremble lest a reputation for being religious should derogate from their reputation as men of sense. "Every man of the world arrogates to himself a superiority of understanding over every religious man."

But these attacks upon his pride will be no bad touchstone of the Christian's sincerity. Let him remember that "that which is too long suppressed is too frequently extinguished."

The disinclination even of good people to serious conversation is next dwelt upon. It is not debate, nor controversy, nor the fiery strife of opinions, that she would advocate, but an occasional utterance from the abundance of the heart, a little exchange of religious thought, a little of that "talking shop," in which physicians or lawyers indulge when they find themselves alone in each other's company.

"One of the things that impede the reception of religion by people of the world is the garment of sadness in which some Christians delight to see Christianity dressed. The spies who return with an unfavourable report of the promised land damp the ardour of those who are thinking of going there.[1]" Let the would-be travellers remember that "religion, with all her beautiful and becoming sanctity, imposes fewer sacrifices, not only of rational but of pleasurable enjoyment, than the uncontrolled dominion of any one vice." Does religion forbid the cheerful enjoyments of life? "Does devotion murder sleep like dissipation? Does she destroy health like intemperance? Does she annihilate fortune like gaming? Does she embitter life like discord? Does religion impose more vigilance than suspicion? or inflict half as many mortifications as vanity?" Vice too has her matryrs.

There are people who allow themselves so much pleasure in exchange for so much charity. "But one good quality can never stand proxy for another. The Christian virtues derive their highest lustre from association."

Religion does not encourage men to fly from society and hide themselves in solitude, to renounce the active

[1] Addison.

duties of life for the cloister. Retirement does not involve goodness. Lot, perhaps, is not the only character who maintained his integrity in a great city, proverbially wicked, and forfeited it in the bosom of retirement. It is not our living in the world, but the world living in us, that is injurious.

"There are so many professing Christians who think that to be in the right everybody must think exactly as they do; but the true Christian 'will whet and sharpen every instrument of goodness, though it be not cast in his own mould, or fashioned after his own pattern.'

"Christianity enjoins the task of renouncing self. The acquisition of glory was the precept of other religions, the contempt of it is the perfection of Christianity."

With regard to those who are Christians only in name, she observes: "An extempore Christian is a ridiculous character."

In the last pages of this little book Hannah More refers to the attempt that is about to be made for the abolition of the African slave trade, an attempt the success of which "will restore the lustre of the British name, and cut off, at a single stroke, as large and disgraceful a portion of national guilt as ever impaired the virtue, or dishonoured the councils of a Christian country."

As we have seen, Hannah More, before she sat down to write this work, had mixed for more than a decade with the great and wealthy of her country. During that time one strong conviction had taken an ever firmer and stronger hold upon her mind, namely that "reformation must begin with the great, or it will never be effectual. Their example is the fountain whence the vulgar draw their habits, actions, and characters. To expect to reform the poor, while the opulent are corrupt, is to throw odours into the stream while the springs are poisoned."

The poor "cannot surely but smile at the disinterestedness of their superiors, who, while they seem anxiously concerned to save others, are so little solicitous about their own state. The ambitious vulgar will hardly relish a salvation which is only intended for plebeians, nor will they be apt to entertain very exalted notions of that promised future reward, the road to which they perceive their betters are so much more earnest to point out to them than to walk in themselves."

We must bear in mind that Hannah was writing before the French Revolution, before the Napoleonic wars, and more than a hundred years before the twentieth century, in which no one is acknowledged to be *great*, and in which the poor have no *betters*.

Thoughts on the Manners of the Great is a small book, which can easily be read through aloud in two hours, but there is a great deal in it, far more than we can put before our readers in this volume, and it is written in a pure and beautiful English (that is, alas! fast disappearing from our midst), and for that, if for no other reason, we can but benefit by its perusal.

Hannah More's writings have been quite as much read and appreciated in the United States as they have in her own country, but I have not been able to discover what reception the Americans gave to *Manners of the Great* at the time of its appearance: as America showed eventually such a warm approval of her book on the education of a princess, ultra democratic views could hardly have stood in the way of their appreciation of her book addressed to the aristocracy; yet a well-known American authoress, Marion Harland, writing in 1900 about Hannah More, says of *Manners of the Great*: "Could a publisher outside a tract house be found for such a treatise at the present day in our country, the book would fall from the press like a stone to the depths of the sea of oblivion, creating no more sensation upon the surface than the bursting of a bubble in mid-Atlantic.

This may be because there are no titled great among us; perhaps the many untitled great ones are so wise in their own conceit that they need no admonition. The effect of the anonymous publication upon London society was like the explosion of a submarine torpedo."

CHAPTER XIX

THE SLAVE TRADE

As soon as the work we have been discussing was off her hands, Hannah began writing her little poem on *The Slave Trade.* She tells her sister that for the last week she has been writing all day and half the night. Of the poem she says: "I grieve I did not set about it sooner, as it must now be done in such a hurry as no poem should ever be written in, to be properly correct; but, good or bad, if it does not come out at the particular moment, when the discussion comes on in Parliament, it will not be worth a straw. This I shall bring out in an open, honourable manner, with my name staring in the front; but the other is to be a clandestine birth; so be sure not a word on the subject."

In the same letter she tells of a visit to Mrs. Delany, whom she found as lively and agreeable as ever. "Her extreme sensibility put me in mind of a remark Mr. Burke once made to me, that she was almost the only person he ever saw who at eighty-eight blushed like a girl."

Hannah More's little poem on slavery has been considered by many competent judges to be the poem in which the vigour of her muse was most decidedly shown. Roberts says of it: "The whole is brilliant, and many of the passages deserve, both on account of the sentiment and the poetical structure, to be enthroned in the memory and the heart."

On January 11, 1788, Hannah wrote to her sisters: "Did I tell you that *Percy* was bespoken by M. de Calonne, and that the late Premier of France translated it into

French, and wished to see it acted here previous to getting it up in Paris ? "

Dining at Lord Mount Edgecombe's, she had met Horace Walpole, " who had been seeing *Percy* the night before," and " quite raved at me for not going. He was in raptures with Mrs. Siddons."

" The slave cause gains proselytes," she continues, " and of course opposers, every day. Mr. Wilberforce has not been well ; so the day for bringing it on is not yet named. My little poem on slavery is too short, and too much hurried ; it of course will be very imperfect ; for I did not begin it till a fortnight ago. I would on no account bring out so slight and hasty a thing on any less pressing an occasion, but here time is everything."

In her next letter home she tells her sisters that Dr. Heberden has given her a ten-pound note for poor Louisa (the Maid of the Haystack), and that she is going to send them a volume of Johnson's letters, just out. " They are such letters," she adds, " as ought to have been written, but ought never to have been printed. . . . Every place to which he was invited, every dose of physic he took, everybody who sent to ask him how he did, is recorded. . . . I am often named, never with unkindness, sometimes with favour. The imprudence of editors and executors is an additional reason why men of parts should be afraid to die."

A few days later Hannah takes Mrs. Trimmer to call on the Bishop of Salisbury, and writes that " the Bishop diverted us by saying he was between two very singular women, one who undertook to reform all the poor, and the other all the great ; but he congratulated her upon having the most hopeful subjects."

Manners of the Great was a success from the first. When the second edition had been out only six days, Cadell wrote to Hannah to say that a third edition must be got ready immediately. She tells her people that " the secret book seems to make its way very much in

the great world, but the demon of suspicion is awakened, I am afraid, not to be lulled to sleep; however, we own nothing. At first it was currently said to be Mr. Wilberforce's; Lord Elgin came to the Bishop of London's and assured them of this as a certain fact; but unfortunately, going from the Bishop to call on Mr. Wilberforce, he found him reading it, and extolling it, which put an end to that conjecture. Then it was as confidently reported to be the Bishop himself, till somebody recollected that the author had said he was not a clergyman."

She goes on to say that she is a little frightened, but nobody has betrayed her, and that it is only by the internal evidence that her book's authorship can be guessed at. "When the author is discovered, I shall expect to find almost every door shut against me," she adds, "*mais n'importe*, I shall only be sent to my darling retirement. I spent Saturday evening at Lady Amherst's; the book lay on the table—several of the company took it up, talked it over, and Mr. Pepys looked me through; so that I never had such difficulty to keep my countenance."

In her next letter she writes: "The other day, just as I was going to dinner, arrived Lady Midleton, saying I must at all events come away with her immediately to dine with Mr. Wilberforce, at her house. We had four or five hours of most confidential and instructive conversation, in which we discussed all the great objects of reform which they have in view."

This letter concludes with a droll remark uttered by Mr. Owen Cambridge, who, finding himself at dinner between Mrs. Garrick and Hannah, suddenly started up, saying he was one of the most unfortunate men in the world, for he was between *popery* and *slavery*.

Persuaded by Lord and Lady Amherst, Hannah went to the trial of Warren Hastings, and heard Burke's famous oration of three hours and a quarter without intermission. She wrote to her sisters: "Such a splendid

and powerful oration I never heard, but it was abusive and vehement beyond all conception. Poor Hastings, sitting by and looking so meek, to hear himself called villain, and cut-throat, &c. The recapitulation of the dreadful cruelties in India was worked up to the highest pitch of eloquence and passion, so that the orator was seized with a spasm which made him incapable of speaking another word, and I did not know whether he might not have died in the exertion of his powers, like Chatham. I think I never felt such indignation as when Burke, with Sheridan standing on one side, and Fox on the other, said, 'Vice incapacitates a man from all public duty, it withers the powers of his understanding, and makes his mind paralytic.' I looked at his two neighbours, and saw they were quite free from any symptoms of palsy."

It was just at this time that the news reached Hannah of the death of Mrs. Delany. She wrote to her sisters: "Alas! Mrs. Delany is dead. She was perfectly sensible, holding a gentleman by the hand, and telling him how full her life had been of blessings; and that what she had to look forward to was still inexpressibly happier than all she had already enjoyed. How is that noble society of ancient days, which I used to meet in her little room, broken up, since I had the honour of being admitted there! Duchess of Manchester, Dowager Lady Gower, Duchess of Portland, Mrs. Delany herself—all gone!"

Cadell sent to tell Hannah that a fourth edition of *Manners of the Great* must be put to press immediately, for the third had come out and sold off in four hours. Almost all the bishops had told Cadell that the book was Hannah's, so the secret was practically out.

Of the next occasion on which she saw Horace Walpole, she writes: "He said not a word of the little sly book, but took me to task in general terms for having exhibited such monstrously severe doctrines. I knew

he alluded to *Manners of the Great,* but we pretended not to understand one another, and it was a most ridiculous conversation. He defended (and that was the joke) religion against me, and said he would do so against the whole bench of bishops, that the Fourth Commandment was the most amiable and merciful law that ever was promulgated, as it entirely considers the ease and comfort of the hard-labouring poor, and beasts of burden; but that it never was intended for persons of fashion, who have no occasion to rest, as they never do anything on the other days; and indeed at the time the law was made there were no people of fashion. He really pretended to be in earnest, and we parted mutually unconverted; he lamenting that I am fallen into the heresy of puritanical strictness, and I lamenting that he is a person of fashion, for whom the Ten Commandments were not made."

A few days later she writes: "I am astonished at the unexpected and undeserved popularity of *The Manners,* it is in the houses of all the great. . . . The fifth edition has been in the press above a week."

In this letter she tells her sisters that she has begun to read the three new volumes of Gibbon's book. "The same gorgeous diction, the same sneers at Christianity, and the same affectation of the French manner, which tainted the first volumes; yet it very fully supplies a vast chasm of information, and must always be considered as an important work. It has much merit, more mischief."

Hannah winds up this letter by saying that she is reading Mr. Bowdler's account of the Revolution in Holland, and, like everything that comes from that family, it is full of truth and good sense. It is a strange coincidence that she should have mentioned Gibbon and Bowdler in the same letter, for after spending many years of his life in *bowdlerising* Shakespeare, it was upon Gibbon that Mr. Bowdler next laid his hand. When

Hannah More first made his acquaintance he was a young doctor with a London practice. He had taken his M.D. at Edinburgh in 1776, and was now in his thirty-fifth year. He became an inspector of prisons on the death of Howard two years later, and it was not till 1818 that he published his edition of Shakespeare, entitled *The Family Shakespeare, in Ten Volumes*. It was in his capacity as an energetic member of the *Proclamation Society* that he met with our authoress. The Bishop of London, John Newton, and Wilberforce were also energetic members.

On May 22, 1788, Hannah wrote to her sisters about the new fashion of entertaining your friends at a *Thé*, which she classed among the stupid new follies of that season. "You are to invite fifty or a hundred people to come at eight o'clock; there is to be a long table, or little parties at small ones; the cloth is to be laid as at breakfast; every one has a napkin—tea and coffee are made by the company as at a public breakfast; the table is covered with rolls, wafers, bread and butter; and what constitutes the very essence of a *Thé*, an immense load of hot buttered rolls and muffins, all admirably contrived to create a nausea in persons fresh from the dinner-table. Now, of all nations under the sun, as I take it, the English are the greatest fools. Because the Duke of Dorset in Paris, where people dine at two, thought this would be a pretty fashion to introduce, we, who dine at six, must adopt this French translation of an English fashion, and fall into it as if it were an original invention, taking up our own custom at third hand. This will be a short folly."

Hannah has been to dine with Mrs. Trimmer, with her twelve children, at Brentford, and describes their home as a scene of instruction and delight. It was truly a remarkable thing that a lady with such a family to bring up on limited means should have found time for all the active philanthropy in which we find Mrs. Trimmer

engaged, not to speak of the leisure she found for writing books which brought more fame than money.

One of Hannah More's most voluminous correspondents after she had settled in her cottage was the Rev. John Newton. The *quondam* captain of a slave-ship was now working heart and soul for the abolition of slavery; he had received Hannah's little poem on the subject with enthusiasm, and had himself written, as an eye-witness, an account of that horrible traffic in human beings. "My account of the slave-trade," he wrote to Hannah, "has the merit of being true. I am not afraid of being solidly contradicted by any or by all who are retained by interest to plead on the other side. Some of my friends wish I had said more, but I think I have said enough. . . . I think this infamous traffic cannot last long—at least this is my hope. But after the period of investigation, should it still be persevered in, I think it will constitute a national sin, and of a very deep dye. I should tremble for the consequences, whatever politicians may think."

After she had been but a few months at Cowslip Green, Hannah wrote to Mr. Newton (in November 1787), describing her "pretty quiet cottage" as "the most perfect little hermitage that can be conceived." And then she confided to her new spiritual adviser that, though the care of her garden gave her employment, health, and spirits, she feared there was a danger of her forming ideal plans of perfect virtue, and dreaming of all manner of imaginary goodness, while neglecting the immediate duties of her actual situation; and she adds: "I have always fancied that if I could secure to myself such a quiet retreat as I have now really accomplished, that I should be wonderfully good, that I should have leisure to store my mind with such and such maxims of wisdom; that I should be safe from such and such temptations; that, in short, my whole summers would be smooth periods of peace and goodness. Now the misfortune is that I

have actually found a great deal of the comfort I expected, but without any of the concomitant virtues. I am certainly happier here than in the agitation of the world, but I do not find that I am one bit better; with full leisure to rectify my heart and affections, the disposition unluckily does not come. I have the mortification to find that petty and (as they are called) innocent employments can detain my heart from heaven as much as tumultuous pleasures." She then goes on to name procrastination as one of her failings.

In his reply, which occupies five closely printed pages, Mr. Newton said: "What you are pleased to say, madam, of the state of your mind, I understand perfectly well; I praise God on your behalf, and I hope I shall earnestly pray for you. I have stood upon that ground myself. . . . We are apt to wonder that when what we accounted hindrances are removed, and the things which we conceived would be great advantages are put within our power, still there is a secret something in the way which proves itself to be independent of all external changes because it is not affected by them. The disorder we complain of is internal. . . . So far as our hearts are right, all places and circumstances which His wise and good providence allots to us are nearly equal; their hindrances will prove helps, losses gains, and crosses will ripen into comforts; but till we are so far apprised of the nature of our disease as to put ourselves into the hands of the great physician, we shall find, like the woman in Luke viii. 23, that every other effort for relief will leave us as it found us. . . . As sinners, the first things we need are pardon, reconciliation, and a principle of life and conduct entirely new. Till then we have no more success or comfort from our endeavours than a man who should attempt to walk whose ankle was dislocated; the bone must be reduced before he can take a single step with safety, or attempt it without increasing his pain." And he winds up with reminding her that the

Christian life is, after all, a warfare, that there will always be much within and much without to be resisted, and there will be a call for habitual self-denial, and that we must learn to rely, not upon our own strength, but upon Him whose wisdom and power are infinite.

On July 23, 1788, Hannah again wrote to Mr. Newton on the same subject: "I have been now for some weeks in the quiet enjoyment of my beloved solitude, and the world is wiped out of my memory as with the sponge of oblivion. . . . I trifle away more time than I ought under pretence (for I must have a creditable motive to impose even upon myself), that it is good for my health, but in reality because it promises a sort of indolent pleasure, and keeps me from thinking and finding out what is amiss with myself. The world, though I live in the gay part of it, I do not actually much love; yet friendship and kindness have contributed to fix me there, and I dearly love many individuals in it. When I am in the great world I consider myself as in an enemy's country, and as beset with snares, and this puts me upon my guard. I know that many people whom I hear say a thousand brilliant and agreeable things, disbelieve, or at least disregard, those truths on which I found my everlasting hopes. This sets me upon a more diligent inquiry into those truths; and 'upon the arch of Christianity the more I press, the stronger I find it.' Fears and snares seem necessary to excite my circumspection; for it is certain that my mind has more languor, and my faith less energy here, where I have no temptations from without, and where I live in the full enjoyment and constant perusal of the most beautiful objects of inanimate nature, the lovely wonders of the munificence and bounty of God. . . . My situation is, as you rightly apprehend, full of danger, yet less from the pleasures than from the deceitful favour and the insinuating applause of the world. The goodness of God will, I humbly trust, preserve me from taking up with so poor

a portion; nay, I hope what He has given me is to show that all is nothing short of Himself; yet there are times when I am apt to think it a great deal, and to forget Him who has promised to be my portion for ever." This letter concludes with an expression of the delight that the perusal, on his recommendation, of *The Pilgrim's Progress* has given her. "I forget my dislike to allegory, while I read the spiritual vagaries of his fruitful imagination." It was Mr. Newton who had led Cowper a few years earlier to read Bunyan, at a time when no one liked to own in public that they had read so unfashionable a book; and he had also given a series of lectures on it to his parishioners at Olney.

A charge of inconsistency has been brought against Hannah More because, while corresponding as she did with Mr. Newton on spiritual subjects, she was also carrying on an animated correspondence with Horace Walpole. As if a mind like hers could not be large enough for both!

Was it for nothing that Providence allowed Horace Walpole, William Cowper, Hannah More, and William Wilberforce to walk the earth at the same time? While Cowper was enriching the Christian Church with its most sublime hymns, and William Wilberforce was preparing his Bill for the abolition of slavery, Horace Walpole too was doing some good in a quiet way, and Hannah More was trying to reform him along with the rest of the great. One wonders that no one has ever thought of censuring Cowper for his friendship with Hayley, a man who had lived for so many years in a state of what we might term open bigamy; yet no charge of inconsistency has been laid at his door.

On August 17, 1788, Horace Walpole wrote to Hannah More that he doubted the authenticity of the new batch of Madame de Sevigné's letters supposed to have been recently discovered. "Do people sell houses wholesale, without opening their cupboards?" he asks.

"This age too deals so much in false coinage, that booksellers and Birmingham give equal vent to what is not sterling, with the only difference that the shillings of the latter pretend that the names are effaced, while the wares of the former pass under borrowed names. . . . This is a little mortifying, while we know that there actually exists in Naples a whole library of genuine Greek and Latin authors, most of whom probably have never been in print; and where it is not unnatural to suppose the works of some classics yet lost may be in being, and the remainder of some of the best; yet at the rate in which they proceed to unroll, it would take as many centuries to bring them to light as have elapsed since they were overwhelmed. Nay, another eruption of Vesuvius may return all the volumes to chaos. Omar is stigmatised for burning the library of Alexandria. Is the King of Naples less a Turk? Is not it almost as unconscientious to keep a seraglio of virgin authors under the custody of nurses, as of blooming Circassians? Consider, my dear madam, I am past seventy, or I should not be so ungallant as to make the smallest comparison between the contents of the two harems. Your picture, which hangs at my elbow, would frown, I am sure, if I had any light meaning." The picture he here refers to was a copy that he had had made of the one by Opie, then in the possession of Mrs. Boscawen.

In her reply to the above, Hannah wrote: "In vain do we boast of the enlightened eighteenth century, and conceitedly talk as if human reason had not a manacle left about her . . . and yet at this very time Mesmer has got an hundred thousand pounds by animal magnetism in Paris, and Mainaduc is getting as much in London. There is a fortune-teller in Westminster who is making little less. Lavator's physiognomy books sell at fifteen guineas a set. The divining-rod is till considered as oracular in many places. Devils are cast out by seven ministers (probably an allusion to the Methodists), and to complete

the disgraceful catalogues, slavery is vindicated in print and defended in the House of Peers! Poor human reason, when wilt thou come to years of discretion?"

What would Hannah More have thought if some one had told her that in the second decade of the twentieth century, ladies of England would be paying a guinea a head to have their future told them by professional palmists? Yet such is the case.

Hannah tells Horace Walpole in this letter that her friend the Rev. Joseph Warton, who came to see her while she was on a visit to Stoke, had been talking to her of him. "He raves about you, and a certain *Walpoliana*, which he says, if ever it is finished, will be the pleasantest book that ever was written." We wonder whether the Rev. Joseph Warton was ever charged with inconsistency!

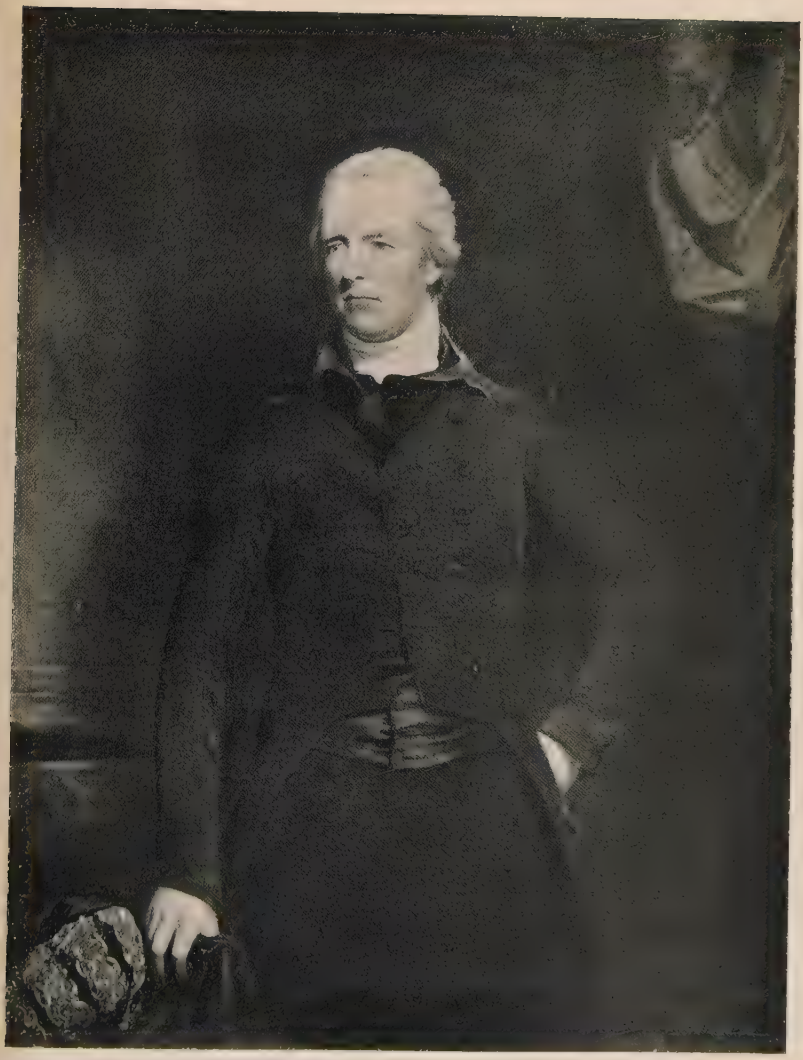
It is an interesting fact that in that little town of Wrington, to the neighbourhood of which Hannah had now retired in search of solitude, had been born, a hundred years before, no less a person than the philosopher Locke. "In a little white house in this village," she writes to Walpole, "was born John Locke. He did not intend to have been born here, but his mother was on a visit when she produced this bright idea, and so bequeathed me something to boast of." Soon after this Mrs. Montagu made Hannah a present of a handsome urn to the memory of Locke, which she placed in her garden. It was afterwards removed to Barley Wood.

We will here give an interesting extract from a letter written to Hannah from Broadstairs, by Mr. Pepys, on September 26, 1788. He says: "I was riding and meditating the other day, when I heard the bell toll in a neighbouring village, and upon inquiring for whom it tolled, was informed that it was for poor Sheridan (the father of Richard Sheridan), who lately finished his career at Margate. I think the day will come when many of his objections to the present mode of education will be con-

sidered, and when a father will not be compelled to tread in the same beaten path, because all his son's contemporaries are going the same way; and yet it is too hazardous for an individual to strike out into an unfrequented road; for though, as a fine writer very justly and very forcibly observes, we must each of us die for ourselves, yet certain it is, that we must in a great degree live for others and with others, though we may not in all instances choose to live like others." In this letter the writer enclosed a subscription towards the expenses of poor "Louisa" (the Lady of the Haystack).

In her reply to the above, Hannah tells Mr. Pepys that the best times to live in are often the worst to write about. "In a novel or a comedy, the moment the lovers are settled and happy they become so insipid that another page of the one, or an additional scene of the other, would be quite surfeiting. If anybody were to write a play about good sort of quiet, reasonable, orderly, prosperous people, the audience would not be able to sit out the first act; they would long for the relief of a little distress, and languish for the refreshment of a little misery. . . . The history of my adventures (during the summer at Cowslip Green) would make as dull a novel as could be had at the circulating library, and that is saying a great deal. I do not, however, complain; I have lived much to my own taste, and have enjoyed some of the best blessings of human life." At the close of this letter she tells Mr. Pepys she will not need his gift for poor Louisa, as the unhappy girl has grown quite helpless and stupid, and it will be best to get her settled in a hospital.

On January 6, 1789, Hannah wrote from Hampton to tell her sisters that Cadell had put into her hands the seventh edition of *Manners* for correction. Of the political situation she wrote: "As to Pitt, if I were a pagan I would raise altars and temples to him, but I



WILLIAM PITT

From the portrait by John Hoppner, R.A.

rejoice with trembling; he has reached the summit of human glory, and is not that summit a very slippery point?"

A few days later she wrote: "Does not Pitt fight like a hero for the poor Queen? But who will fight for him, for he has not a hundred a year in the world? Like an honest old house-steward going to be turned off, he is anxious to put everything in order, and leave the house in such condition that the next servants may do as little mischief as possible. How unkindly the Opposition treated Wilberforce! but he is not only of a very different spirit, but is a match for them at their own weapon—eloquence, of which few men have more; and with as much wit as if he had no piety." In this letter she refers several times to the poor King, then out of his mind, and on February 16th she writes of him as thought to be recovering. "I believe," she adds, "that he is the first person whose character was ever raised by the loss of his reason."

In the same letter she tells how a friend of hers, having called on Pitt, in the midst of all his cares and distractions, found him alone, gay, and cheerful, his mind totally disengaged from the scenes in which he had passed the day. He was reading Milton aloud with great emphasis, and he said his mind was so totally engaged in Paradise that he had forgotten there were any people in the world but Adam and Eve. "This seems a trifle, but it is an indication of a great mind, so entirely to discharge itself of such a load of care, and to find pleasure in so innocent and sublime an amusement."

On February 25, 1789, Hannah wrote to her sisters: "I was out to dinner, and we were talking on what would probably be the event of things, when lo! a violent rap at the door, and Lord Mount Edgecombe was announced. He came in almost breathless, directly from the House of Lords, and told us that the King was recovered. We

were quite transported, and Mrs. Garrick fairly got up and kissed him before the company. Soon afterwards arrived the Duke of Beaufort, confirming the news."

In a letter to Horace Walpole, written in April of this year, Hannah thanks him for sending her a copy of Dr. Erasmus Darwin's *Botanic Garden* with his own annotations in the margin. She had read it, but it was a poem that did not attract her; it was likely to fill her with alarm "lest every rose or pink she gathered might make a multitude of widows and orphans. Seriously," she adds, "one cannot care for the weal or woe of plants; and while one reads with admiration such fine verses, one cannot help wishing that they related the history, or analysed the passions or manners, of men and women, the only people in whom after all, with all their faults, I take any great interest."

Her next letter tells of the "opening of the great cause of Abolition in the House of Commons, in which Pitt and Fox are united," and she tells how Lord Amherst came and carried her off from a little chat she was having with Mr. Raikes (of Sunday-school fame). She then refers to the constitutional ball in commemoration of the King's recovery, which was a great success, and she adds: "I have been to-day with the Duchess of Argyll and her daughters; the Duchess desired I might be introduced to her. Alas! the sight of her is a better antidote to vanity than whole volumes of philosophy, for there are no traces of that beauty, which so few years ago enchanted mankind."

"We begin to be all anxiety, now the great slave question comes so near the moment of decision," she continues. "I was in a large party one evening, showing a section of the African ship, in which the transportation of the negroes is so well represented, to Mr. Walpole, when who should be announced but Mr. Tarleton, the Liverpool delegate, who is come up to defend slavery against humanity. I popped the book out of sight,

snapped the string of my eloquence, and was mute at once."

About this time Hannah received a copy of Madame de Staël's book, *Éloge de Rousseau*, direct from the writer. The Neckers and Hannah had met some years before, but at that time their daughter was only a young girl.

In May Hannah wrote to her sisters: "I fear there will be great opposition to the Abolition in the Lords. I dined with a party of peers at Lord Ossory's, and there was not one friend to that humane bill."

CHAPTER XX

BISHOP BONNER'S GHOST

In June of this year (1798) Mrs. Boscawen showed Horace Walpole a copy of a satirical poem that Hannah More had written while on a visit to the Bishop of London at Fulham Palace, entitled *Bishop Bonner's Ghost;* it so delighted him that he at once wrote to the poetess, who was by this time at Cowslip Green, suggesting some slight alterations, begging her to let him print it at his private press at Strawberry Hill, and scolding her for not having sent him a copy. In her reply Hannah told him that the poem had been struck off at a heat, and that on the day it was written she had had some thought of sending it to him, "but when the first ardour of vanity (which I am ashamed to own too often attends the moment of composition) was cooled, I had not the courage to send it to you. But now that you write so encouragingly (though you abuse me) I cannot bear that you should have them copied by any other hand than mine. I send this under cover to the Bishop of London, to whom I write your emendations, and desire they may be considered as the true reading. What is odd, I did write both the lines so at first, but must go a-tinkering them afterwards; my first thoughts are often best—I spoil them by mending. . . . I do not pretend that I am not flattered by your obliging proposal of printing these slight verses at the Strawberry Press." And she adds that she herself never would have thought such verses worth printing, but he can do as he pleases.

On July 2nd, Horace Walpole wrote to tell Hannah that he hoped to print at least two hundred copies of

the poem, and that he wanted her to arrange beforehand with a publisher to have another edition ready, for the difficulty of obtaining his private edition would make a second eagerly sought for, and he added: "I wish to raise an additional appetite to that which everybody has for your writings, and I am happy to have been the instrument of preserving what your modesty would have sunk."

A week later, Hannah replied: "You cannot imagine how proud I shall be to issue from the press of Strawberry Hill, a distinction which 'was meant for merit though it fell on me.' Few things have happened to me from which I shall derive a pleasanter feeling. . . . I hope you will not be angry with me, but I am clear about not printing a second edition. I should certainly never have printed a first myself; so your very scrupulous conscience may be at rest, for you will do me a great honour, without impairing my profit."

The poem as Walpole printed it was headed by a neat engraving of Strawberry Hill, and Hannah writes: "I am quite enchanted to see my poor base metal bear the stamp and impress of Strawberry Hill, whose Gothic towers and air of elder time so agreeably keep up the idea of haunted walks and popish spirits."

It was Hannah's great wish that Horace Walpole and the Bishop of London should become acquainted with one another, and she took advantage of the fact of this poem having been written at Fulham Palace and printed at Strawberry Hill to accomplish her object. Horace Walpole had a very high opinion of the worth of the poem in question. In sending a copy of it to the Countess of Ossory a few days later, he wrote on 16th July: "It would be worth my while to keep shop in earnest if I could often have such wares to vend. I do think I have some merit with that tiny commonwealth, that proudly calls itself the republic of letters . . . for having sometimes, almost by force, obtained for the

public works of intrinsic value and rarity. I shall sit mighty low on the bench of authors; but Kirgate (his printer) and I shall not give place to many printers in the offices of the Temple of Fame."

In this letter Walpole speaks of the political troubles in France: "The civil war in France, I find has taken gigantic steps. How strange it is to me to have lived to see what I have seen! sights that the most microscopic eye of penetration could not have discovered in embryo. America lost and settled into a republic; the Jesuits annihilated and convents abolished by the house of Austria; all France enthusiastic for liberty. But I look on the revolution in that country as a temporary paroxysm that will not last."

On July 20th he wrote again to Hannah: "I never shall be angry with your conscientiousness, though I will not promise never to scold it, as you know I sometimes think you carry it too far; and how pleasant to have a friend to scold on such grounds! I see all your delicacy in what you call your double treachery, and your kind desire of connecting your two friends. The seeds are sprung up already; and the bishop has already condescended to make me the first and indeed so unexpected a visit that, had I in the least surmised it, I should certainly, as became me, have prevented him." He had sent her two copies of the poem, specially printed on brown paper as a rarity, adding: "I believe if there were but one ugly woman in the world, she would occasion a longer war than Helen did." This remark has often been quoted by later writers, but seldom in the connection in which it arose.

It is evident that the reason of Hannah's refusal to publish *Bishop Bonner's Ghost* was a consciousness that its sentiments were such as would be likely to hurt the susceptibilities of her friend Mrs. Garrick. Indeed, my first impression on reading it was one of surprise that Hannah should ever have ventured to write a satire

on the religious tenets of her greatest friend. Walpole had thought of this too, and he wrote to Hannah that he would not venture, *vu le sujet*, to send a copy to Mrs. Garrick, and added, "I do not know whether you will venture."

On 9th August he wrote again: "Everybody is charmed with your poem. I have not heard one breath but of applause. . . . In confirmation I enclose a note from the Duchess of Gloucester [his niece, and sister-in-law to the King], who certainly never before wished to be an authoress."

Hannah's reply to the above was written from Sandleford House, while she was on a visit to Mrs. Montagu in September. In it she tells him that Dr. Johnson once said to her," Never mind whether they praise or abuse your writings; anything is tolerable except oblivion, . . . " and she goes on to say that she has been amusing herself by sailing down the beautiful river Wye, looking at abbeys and castles with Mr. Gilpin in her hand to teach her to criticise, and how she has been living in sober magnificence with the Plantagenet Dowager Duchess at Stoke, and that she has had first Mrs. Montagu at her cottage, then Mrs. Garrick, and afterwards Mr. Wilberforce, "so that with all my fantastic dreams of hermitage and retreat . . . anything less like a hermit, or more like a dissipated fine lady, you cannot easily imagine." In this letter she also alludes to the dreadful state of France, and to the recent destruction of the Bastille.

The Bishop of London was delighted with *Bishop Bonner's Ghost*, and wrote to Hannah that her poem was "the prettiest copy of verses in the world; for no one, I do affirm, writes such delicious poetry as the ghost of a popish Bishop. . . . Poor dear Bonner! How little did he imagine that he, who had not a grain of wit himself, should be the cause of so much in others. He, good man, in the simplicity of his

heart, thought of no other amusement but that of burning heretics."

Horace Walpole, in sending a copy to Elizabeth Carter, wrote: "The more I read it the more I like it. It is so perfect, that I do not think a word could be amended, and yet it has the ease and freedom of a sketch. The sense, satire, irony, and compliments have all their complete merit." This was indeed high praise, when we consider from whom and to whom it was written.

In a letter to Elizabeth Carter written about this time Hannah tells her friend: "While I was at the dear Bishop's at Fulham, the trifling incident recorded in the argument happened. The Bishop cut a little walk through a dark thicket, to which I gave the name of the *Monk's Walk*, and the subject, obviously enough, suggested the idea of the verses."

Hannah, in spite of the applause of all who were allowed to read the poem, adhered to her resolution, not to have any more copies of *Bonner's Ghost* printed, and it was not until the year 1801 that she consented to publish it—that is, twenty-two years after Horace Walpole had printed it privately at Strawberry Hill.

The story of the poem is as follows: In the gardens of Fulham there was a dark recess, and at the end of it stood a chair which once belonged to Bishop Bonner One morning, just as the clock of the Gothic Chapel had struck six, Bishop Porteus undertook to cut with his own hand a narrow walk through the thicket. He had no sooner begun to clear the way than the ghost of Bishop Bonner, starting up from the chair that had belonged to him more than two hundred years before, uttered in a tone of just and bitter indignation the verses in question.

The whole composition, including the footnotes and the fictitious date, A.D. 1900, is nothing but a naughty skit. The ghost is particularly scandalised at the sight

of the Bishop's wife, and says, after a long tirade against the Protestants :—

"But soft—what gracious form appears ?
Is this a convent's life ?
Atrocious sight ! by all my fears,
A prelate with a wife !

Ah, sainted Mary ! not for this
Our pious labours joined :
The witcheries of domestic bliss
Had shook e'en Gardiner's mind.

Hence, all the sinful, human ties,
Which mar the cloister's plan ;
Hence, all the weak, fond charities,
Which make man feel for man."

Besides all the other visitors mentioned by Hannah, Mrs. Kennicott had spent a fortnight at Cowslip Green this summer, and Hannah's sisters had come to her for their holiday from school teaching, so the cottage must have been a fairly capacious one, even if its roof was thatched. Wilberforce had brought his sister and his reader with him, and his short visit, little as any one dreamed it at the time, was to prove an epoch-making event, not only in the life of the Misses More, but in the history of English philanthropy. We read in the biography of Wilberforce that it was this visit that gave rise to Hannah's and her sister's great exertions on behalf of the poor around them which only ended with their death, and which marked the beginning of a new era in the annals of the English poor.

It was in the company of William Wilberforce and his sister that Hannah took the tour in Monmouthshire described in her letter to Horace Walpole ; in a letter to Elizabeth Carter dated October 1st, she again refers to this tour : "We sailed down the pleasant and picturesque Wye, enjoying at once the benefits of improving conversation and the charms of the most beautiful and interesting scenery."

CHAPTER XXI

WILLIAM WILBERFORCE

It is to the diary of Hannah More's youngest sister, Martha, or Pattie, as she was generally called, that we are indebted for a succinct account of what took place on the memorable occasion of Wilberforce's first visit to Cowslip Green. "The cliffs of Cheddar," she wrote, "are esteemed the greatest curiosity in those parts. We recommended Wilberforce not to quit the country till he had spent a day in surveying these tremendous works of nature. We easily prevailed upon him, and the day was fixed, but after a little reflection he changed his mind, appeared deeply engaged upon some particular study, fancied time would scarcely permit, and the whole was given up. The subject of the cliffs was renewed at breakfast; we again extolled their beauties, and urged the pleasure he would receive by going. He was prevailed on and went. I was in the parlour when he returned; and with the eagerness of vanity (having recommended the pleasure) I inquired how he liked the cliffs? He replied they were very fine, but the poverty and distress of the people was dreadful. This was all that passed. He retired to his apartment and dismissed even his reader. I said to his sister, and mine, I feared Mr. Wilberforce was not well. The cold chicken and wine put into the carriage for his dinner was returned untouched. Mr. Wilberforce appeared at supper seemingly refreshed with a higher feast than we had sent with him. The servant at his desire was dismissed, when immediately he began: 'Miss Hannah More, something must be done for Cheddar.' He then proceeded to a

particular account of his day, and of the inquiries he had made respecting the poor; there was no resident minister, no manufactory, nor did there appear any dawn of comfort, either temporal or spiritual. The method of possibility of assisting them was discussed till a late hour. It was at length decided in a few words by Mr. Wilberforce exclaiming, 'If you will be at the trouble I will be at the expense.'"

At that time the vicar of Cheddar was non-resident, and his curate, who lived nine miles off at Wells, visited the parish on Sundays only. In a letter to Elizabeth Carter Hannah wrote, on October 1st: "My whole time . . . has not been devoted to such idle pursuits as travelling and visiting. I am engaged in a work in which I am sure I shall have your hearty prayers and good wishes. You will, I dare say, mistake the word 'work,' and think it is some literary vanity; but no, *le voici*. A friend of mine and myself having with great concern discovered a very large village, at many miles distance from me, containing incredible multitudes of poor, plunged in an excess of vice, poverty, and ignorance beyond what one would suppose possible in a civilised and Christian country, have undertaken the task of seeing if we cannot become humble instruments of usefulness to these poor creatures, in the way of schools, and a little sort of manufactory. The difficulties are great, and my hopes not sanguine; but He who does not 'despise the day of small things,' will, I trust, bless this project. I am going directly down to my little colony, to see what can be done before winter sets in. My long absence at that period will be a grievous circumstance."

In her reply, written from Eastry, Kent, Miss Carter sympathised warmly with Hannah's new undertaking, and offered to send some money towards the expenses of the new scheme.

William Wilberforce was now in his thirty-first year;

he had passed his thirtieth birthday (August 24th) with Hannah More at Cowslip Green. For many a long year from that date he supported with his own purse the work begun and carried on so energetically by Hannah and Martha More, among those depraved and neglected colliers and miners of the Mendip Hills. Wells and Gloucester had formerly sent missions among them from time to time, and churches had been built, but from the suppression of the monasteries to the visit of Wilberforce nothing seems to have been done for them. The livings were only poor vicarages, held by pluralists, who never dreamed of residence in so savage a district.[1] The depravity of the inhabitants made it almost dangerous to visit the Cheddar Caves.

On October 2nd Wilberforce wrote to Hannah: "I have taken measures to send a competent supply of the books which you desired [for the schools she was starting]. Your labours can only be equalled by Spenser's Lady-knights, and they seem to be much of the same kind too. I mean you have all sorts of monsters to contend with. . . . I trust you will speak freely when the money is exhausted."

Wilberforce recommended the sisters, either now or a little later, to get down one of John Wesley's so-called "Comets" to help in the work. He still looked upon the Wesleys and their followers as members of the Established Church, which indeed they were.

Robert Raikes had already inaugurated his Sunday-schools, as Miss Yonge observes, and Mrs. Trimmer had been some years engaged in her good work among the factory hands at Brentford, but neither of these reformers had so wild and savage a class of people to deal with as the Misses More found at Cheddar and the surrounding villages, whose populations were a positive terror to the neighbourhood. For fuller details we refer our readers to Pattie More's journal, which was published many

[1] See Miss Yonge's account.

WILLIAM WILBERFORCE

From the unfinished portrait by Sir Thomas Lawrence, P.R.A.

years after it was written, under the title of *Mendip Annals*.

John Wesley, who had now only eighteen months to live, had become acquainted with Wilberforce in the home of the Misses More. Wilberforce has left on record his impression of his first meeting with Charles Wesley. "I went, I think, in 1786, to see her (Hannah More), and when I came into the room Charles Wesley rose from the table, around which a numerous party sat at tea, and coming forward to me gave me solemnly his blessing. I was scarcely ever more affected. Such was the effect of his manner and appearance that it altogether overset me, and I burst into tears, unable to restrain myself."

The memorable letter written by John Wesley on his deathbed, and addressed to Wilberforce, would in all probability never have been penned, had not Hannah More brought these two great men together; I do not think it will be out of place if we insert it here.

Letter from John Wesley to William Wilberforce

"FEB. 23, 1791.

"DEAR SIR,—Unless the divine power has raised you up to be an Athanasius *contra mundum*, I see not how you can go through your glorious enterprize, in opposing that execrable villainy, which is the scandal of religion, of England, and of human nature. Unless God has raised you up for this very thing, you will be worn out by the opposition of men and devils; but if God be for you who can be against you? Are all of them together stronger than God? Oh, be not weary in well doing. Go on in the name of God, and in the power of His might, till even American slavery, the vilest that ever saw the sun, shall vanish away before it. That He who has guided you from your youth up may continue to strengthen you in this and in all things, is the prayer of,—Dear sir, your affectionate servant, JOHN WESLEY."

On the day after he had written the above John Wesley sank into that lethargy from which he never regained consciousness. Wilberforce's sons found the letter docketed among their father's papers as "Wesley's last words."

We have seen how Hannah More drew together the Bishop of London and Horace Walpole, and we find in several of her letters to the latter allusions to Wilberforce and the way in which he was devoting his life to the abolition of the slave trade; she had also had many conversations with Walpole on the question of slavery. In September 1789 Walpole wrote to her: "I know whence you wrote last, but not where you are now—you give me no hint. I believe you fly lest I should pursue, and as if you were angry that I had forced you to sprout into laurels." After alluding to the taking of the Bastille he went on: "The États cannot remain a mob of kings, and will prefer a single one to a larger mob of kings and greater tyrants. The nobility, the clergy, the people of property will wait, till by address and money they can divide the people. Or, whoever gets the larger or more victorious army into his hands, will be a Cromwell or a Monk. In short, a revolution produced by a national vertigo does not promise a crop of legislators. It is time that composes a constitution: it formed ours."

He then proceeds to say, he does not think "your poor negroes" will be emancipated all at once; but their fate will be much alleviated as the attempts will have alarmed their butchers enough to make them gentler; and he goes on to say that he wishes some one would invent some machinery by which manual labour on the sugar plantations might be avoided, and he winds up with, "If you are sitting under a cowslip at your cottage these reveries may amuse you."

Horace Walpole was becoming alarmed lest Hannah might have resolved to abandon her pen and devote all her strength to the poor, at home and abroad, and in

November we find him writing: "Do you think I am pleased to hear that you have not been writing? Who is it says something like this line?—

'Hannah will not write, and Lactilla will.'

They who think her [the milkwoman's] *Earl Goodwin* will outdo Shakespeare might be right if they specified in what way. I believe she may write worse than he sometimes did, though that is not easy; but to excel him—Oh! I have not words adequate for my contempt for those who can suppose such a possibility. . . ." He then asks if Mr. Wilberforce could not obtain to have the enfranchisement of the negroes started in France, as a more favourable soil, and remarks that the Jews are already claiming their natural rights in that country.

In her reply Hannah tells Walpole that Mr. Wilberforce and others have been considering the construction of a plough that might save the negro much misery. She also tells him that the newspapers have been pleased to marry her to Dr. Priestley. She thinks she can account for the report. It had probably arisen through her having stood up for the Socinians, in a large gathering, on account of the sincerity they had shown, and the courage they had displayed for the sake of their convictions. She adds that she never saw Priestley in her life but once, and then he had been married twenty years.

Dr. Joseph Priestley was twelve years older than Hannah More, and he had married in 1762. His first public announcement of his discovery of oxygen had been made in a letter to a scientific friend in March 1775. It was the important discovery which contained the first germs of modern chemistry, and is one of the noted examples of discovery by induction. Priestley was as great a theologian as he was a man of science, but he is far more known to posterity in the latter capacity than in the former; his work in science having received the

approval of the whole world, whereas his teaching as a theologian, though it made him to the Unitarians what Wesley was to the Methodists, was so contrary to the universally accepted dogmas of Christianity in certain important points that it has been shunned by all but his own peculiar followers. In his rejection of the principle of private judgment with regard to the interpretation of the meaning of the Bible he was endorsing the views of the Roman Church. He objected to all purely modern interpretations of Holy Writ, declaring that the meaning attached to it by the early Christians ought to be decisive. An *Essay on Government* which Priestley wrote in the seventies contained the sentence to which Bentley afterwards owned himself indebted for the famous phrase, "the greatest happiness of the greatest number." His biographers say that it was as a pioneer of religious reform that Priestley wished to be judged; but as he spent the latter years of his life in America, his fame in that direction was somewhat eclipsed, even among his own followers, by that of his successor, Channing.

Like Hannah More, Priestley was a rigid economist of his time: he always worked with a watch on the table before him, and he never began to read a book without deciding in his own mind how much time he would allow to it and when he would finish it. Like Hannah, he had a great aptitude for rapid work. There is a great difference between rapidity in working and hurry—a fact which students in the twentieth century are rather apt to overlook; for the former, method and order are essential, but hurry and hustle can be indulged in without the aid of either. Hannah More was a constant sufferer from headaches throughout her long life, so she had more to contend with than Priestley, who never seems to be troubled with any kind of ill-health; like Gladstone, he did not know what a headache was. Hannah More portioned out the weeks of good health with the utmost care. She used to say that she would never stop to

cross a *t* or dot an *i* when she was feeling her fittest. The moments in which she was at her best were scrupulously reserved for the greatest efforts of her brain. Priestley attributed the remarkable ease with which he wrote prose to the fact of his having been a great versifier in his youth. And certainly it is well known that all our best prose writers have written verse. Hannah More's success in that line may also be partly attributable to the same cause. The great Addison had long been a distinguished writer of Latin poetry before he made his name as a prose writer.

Horace Walpole was much amused at the papers joining the names of Hannah More and Joseph Priestley together. In his reply to her letter he wrote: "The newspapers, no doubt, thought Dr. Priestley could not do better than espouse you. He certainly would be very judicious could he but obtain your consent; but alas! you would soon squabble about Socinianism, or some of those 'isms.'"

It was in this year (1789) that Hannah More's four sisters gave up the school for young ladies which they had successfully conducted for thirty-two years, and settled in Great Pultency Street, Bath—a house which they had built for themselves, and which now, in 1911, bears the number 74. It was a singular circumstance, as Hannah's biographer has observed, that each of the four houses these sisters lived in was built by themselves.[1] "Indeed I do feel a very sincere joy in your account," wrote Miss Carter to Hannah, "that your excellent sisters, after many years spent in a useful task, are going to enjoy the blessings of liberty and repose, before life is worn down to an incapacity for reasonable pleasures."

Among their many kind acts the sisters had been helping with money the mother of poor Chatterton, and about this time we find Mrs. Montagu inquiring after her and asking Hannah to give her a guinea for her behalf.

[1] Three of them at least are still standing and inhabited.

It is evident from Hannah's letters that the Mores were not a musical family, and that she herself had less sympathy with music than perhaps with any other of the sister arts. She had heard Miss Sheridan sing in London as "Linlay" without any particular pleasure, in 1774, and she cordially disliked the opera, but she constantly speaks in the eighties of hearing "Mrs. Bates" with great pleasure and appreciation. When a guest of the Bishop of Salisbury, in 1789, during the time of the "music meeting" she remained at home on the night of the festivity at her own express desire, but this was more on account of a troublesome tooth, not from indifference to good music.

Like all persons of her *genre*, Hannah More was a voracious and an untiring reader all her life long.[1] She writes now to Mrs. Boscawen that during the previous winter at Hampton she had taken it into her head to read steadily through a whole shelf of books, without giving herself any chance of selection, but taking the volumes as they happened to stand on the shelf. "It was diverting to see," she writes, "what a mass of erudition I swallowed. It was impossible they should assimilate so as to make a good literary style. Take some in the order in which I read them. *Devotions of St. François de Sales; Life of Spinoza; Sentiments de Piété; Cartouche the Highwayman; Fénelon; Queen Christina;* Sir Thomas Brown's very learned miscellanies; and (eke very obscure) *Mr. Tom Brown's Letters; Life of St. Paul; Spanish Novels;* and *The Use of Adversity*, by Bussy Rabutin. I actually got to the end of my shelf, for I chose a short one, and one on which I was sure there was no poetry, which is too serious an engagement to risk without deliberation."

All this time the private circulation of *Bishop Bonner*

[1] Her friend Wilberforce was also a great reader. It is said that before he had been two days in a house he could tell the names of every book it contained.

Ghost among Hannah's Protestant friends and acquaintances was bringing her much praise. Mrs. Boscawen wrote: "Lord Onslow is gone into Surrey; but I wish you had seen his lordship last week enter my room in triumph. 'Here, madam, I have brought you something that you are worthy to see, you will be so delighted with it; Mr. Walpole has given it to Lady Onslow; and I ran away with it, vowing Mrs. Boscawen should see it this minute; so read it, and I will wait to carry it safe back again; it is charming.'" But Mrs. Boscawen had been the first person to whom Hannah sent a copy, and this she had shown to Lord Onslow.

From this time the Misses More, now in their house at Great Pulteney Street, Bath, divided their time between this new home and Hannah's quiet cottage. For some time past Hannah had been hoping to devote the hours of her solitude to literary work and study, but, as her biographer remarks, "there was no rest for her but in the consciousness of being useful." "She could not, though feeble in frame, withhold herself from taking an active part in the instruction of the poor population around her; and in every good work she undertook to promote, her talents and zeal soon made her the leader and directress." It is because she was always the chief organiser that we find her name connected with the work, when the names of her sisters, who were all splendidly active also, are often passed over in silence.

The school which the sisters established at Cheddar rapidly grew so large that it included nearly three hundred children. There was at that time much prejudice against the education of the poor, just as we find it in Russia today, and this good work soon met with opposition. Many of the rich farmers in the neighbourhood thought they were showing their patriotism by putting hindrances in the way of Hannah and her sisters, and one of them was actually heard to say that the country round him had never prospered since religion had been brought

to it by the monks of Glastonbury. The ladies had great difficulty in finding suitable masters and mistresses for the schools they started, and those whom they had appointed had often to be trained to their duties.

In the autumn of this year (1789) Hannah wrote to Mr. Wilberforce from the George Hotel, Cheddar: "I was told we should meet with great opposition if I did not try to propitiate the chief despot of the village, who is very rich and very brutal; so I ventured to the den of this monster, in a country as savage as himself, near Bridgewater. He begged I would not think of bringing any religion into the country; it was the worst thing in the world for the poor, for it made them lazy and useless. . . . Somewhat dismayed to find that my success bore no proportion to my submissions, I was almost discouraged from more visits; but I found that friends must be secured at all events, for if these rich savages set their faces against us, and influenced the poor people, I saw that nothing but hostilities would ensue; so I made eleven more of these agreeable visits; . . . Miss Wilberforce would be shocked, had she seen the petty tyrants whose insolence I stroked and tamed, the ugly children I fondled, the pointers and spaniels I caressed, the cider I commended, and the wine I swallowed. After these irresistible flatteries, I inquired of each if he could recommend me to a house: and said I had a little plan which I hoped would secure their orchards from being robbed, their rabbits from being shot, their game from being stolen, and which might lower the poor rates. . . . I gained at length the hearty encouragement of the whole people and their promise to discourage or favour the poor in proportion as they were attentive or negligent in sending their children. Pattie, who is with me, says she has good hope that the hearts of some of these rich poor wretches may be touched. They are as ignorant as the beasts that perish, intoxicated every day before dinner, and plunged in such vices as make me begin to

think London a virtuous place. By their assistance I procured immediately a good house, which, when a partition is taken down and a window added, will receive a great number of children. The house and an excellent garden, almost an acre of ground, I have taken at once for six guineas and a half per year. I have ventured to take it for seven years—there's courage for you! It is to be put in order immediately; 'for the night cometh,' and it is a comfort to think that though I may be in dust and ashes in a few weeks, yet by that time this business will be in actual motion. I have written to different manufacturing towns for a mistress, but can get nothing hitherto. As to the mistress for the Sunday-school, and the religious part, I have employed Mrs. Easterbrook, of whose judgment I have a good opinion. I hope Miss Wilberforce will not be frightened, but I am afraid she must be called a Methodist. I asked the farmers if they had no resident curate; they told me they had a right to insist on one; which right, they confessed, they had never ventured to exercise, for fear their *tithes should be raised*. I blushed for my species. Mr. G—— (the only one of the clergy who ever came near the place) is intoxicated about six times a week, and very frequently is prevented from preaching by two black eyes, honestly earned by fighting."

In a letter to Mrs. Kennicott, Hannah explained that the village she had fixed upon for the base of her operations was the central one among six large ones, which had no resident curate. "The vicar, who lives a long way off, is but ninety-four year old, insists on my taking a lease, and is as rigorous about the rent as if I were taking it for an assembly room."

In her next letter to the same friend she writes: "It is grievous to reflect that while we are sending missionaries to our distant colonies, our own villages are perishing for lack of instruction. We have in this neighbourhood thirteen adjoining parishes without so much as a resident

curate. . . . We have therefore established schools and various little institutions over a tract of country of ten or twelve miles, and have near five hundred children in training."

After Christmas we find Hannah again with Mrs. Garrick at Hampton, whence she writes to her sister Martha: "Mr. Walpole has given me two guineas for our poor man who was cut down after he had nearly hanged himself. I have written to Mr. Hare to continue his allowance, and still to endeavour to impress his mind with a sense of religion, and repentance for his crime."

Towards the close of the same letter she says: "I think very often with concern of poor Yearsley's [the milkwoman's] situation. I could get a famous medicine which has done wonders, if you can contrive to find out whether she would take it; but I suppose the poor creature would be afraid to take anything of my recommending."

CHAPTER XXII

RELIGION OF THE FASHIONABLE WORLD

In spite of all the many activities that Hannah More was engaged in, she found time between the years 1789 and 1790 to write for the rich as well as to work for the instruction of the poor. It was towards the close of 1790 that she published her *Estimate of the Religion of the Fashionable World.*

Not many months before, the Duke of Grafton had published his *Hints to the Association for Preventing Vice and Immorality,* and Hannah refers to this tract in the first page of her new work. She fully agrees with the Duke in his belief that the immorality of the lower classes is increased by the bad example set them by the aristocracy. If the rich did not take the trouble to go to church, why should those to whom time was far more precious waste theirs in attending divine worship? "The soul, nevertheless, as well as the body, requires its stated repairs and regular renovations," and "that religious duty to which no fixed time is assigned is seldom, it is to be feared, performed at all." Several pages are devoted to a discussion on the services of the Established Church.

Cowper's edition of Milton had just appeared, and Mr. Newton wrote to Hannah in November that he was sorry to see the author of *The Task* degraded into a mere editor, though of Milton himself. "Yet it is pitiful," he goes on, "and to many who love him, it seems strange, yea, passing strange, that a writer so truly original should not favour us with writings in his own original way." He then proceeds to attribute this to the friends who

"have buzzed about him, and by their fine words and fair speeches, have imperceptibly given an inferior direction to his aims, and withdrawn him more out of my reach. For there was a time when he would not have undertaken a work of any extent without previously apprising me. The state of his mind makes me cautious how I express my grief and disappointment, otherwise I should write to him in large letters. . . . I hinted to him my fears lest your attention to your important services round Mendip should deprive the public of what they still expect from your pen. He has caught my fears, but I hope both his and mine will prove groundless."

Cowper was indeed afraid lest Hannah might give up her literary work, and on November 16 he wrote to Mr. Newton:[1] "I was much pleased with your account of your visit to Cowslip Green; both for the sake of what you saw there, and because I am sure you must have been as happy in such company as any situation in this world can make you. Miss More has been always employed since I first heard of her doings, as becomes a Christian. So she was, while endeavouring to reform the unreformable Great; and so she is, while framing means and opportunities to instruct the more tractable Little. Horace's *Virginibus puerisque* may be her motto; but in a sense much nobler than he has annexed to it. I cannot, however, be entirely reconciled to her being henceforth silent, though even for the sake of her present labours. A pen useful as hers ought not, perhaps, to be laid aside; neither, perhaps, will she altogether renounce it, but when she has established her schools, and habituated them to the discipline she intends, will find it desirable to resume it. I rejoice that she has a sister like herself, capable of bidding defiance to fatigue and hardships, to dirty roads and wet raiment, in so excellent a cause."

[1] See Southey's edition of Cowper's Letters, vol. xv. p. 237.

Cowper was now in his fiftieth year. Miss Yonge is mistaken in saying that he had written some of his poems on slavery when Hannah commenced hers. He did not attempt this subject till after he had seen her poem on slavery advertised, as he says himself in one of his letters.

For Patty's autograph book Cowper sent the following lines :—

> "In vain to live from age to age
> We modern bards endeavour ;
> In Patty's book I wrote one page,
> And gained my point for ever."
>
> WILLIAM COWPER.

There is something almost pathetic in the way in which Cowper and Hannah More were each concerned about the other's neglect of a great gift, and both expressing their fears on behalf of each other in their letters to their mutual friend Mr. Newton. Of Cowper's editing Milton, Hannah writes : "It is Ulysses shooting from a baby's bow. In his own original way he has few competitors : in his new walk he has many superiors ; he can do the best thing better than any man, but others can do middling things better than he."

Cowper might have said much the same about Hannah's latest publication. Good as it was in its way, it might, one would have thought, have been written just as well by any one of the many bishops she counted among her friends, neither of whom had been entrusted with her gift—of poetry ; but for men in their position to speak so plainly to so powerful a class might have been risking too much. Roberts says that at this time Hannah was gradually but steadily withdrawing herself from general society, "and indulging in a closer intimacy with those whose religious sentiments were congenial with her own." Her four sisters had retired from their

school-teaching in affluent circumstances, and one cannot refrain from wishing that some of them might have been able to relieve Hannah from the arduous physical labour and the fatigue of riding many miles in all weathers to the little schools she was establishing. There has never yet been a case of a writer doing his best in literary work while undergoing great physical strain, and we know that Hannah's was not a robust constitution. As far as her abandoning poetry was concerned, Cowper's fears were only too well grounded; she never again wrote anything that could add to her fame as a poetess. Her prose writings, however, did not come to a standstill. She went on writing, and it was many years after this change in her religious life that she produced her prose masterpiece, her powerful essay on the education of an heir to the British throne.

About this time Mr. Newton was engaged in editing some extracts from the letters of a pious servant girl, a little book for which he wrote an anonymous preface. He wrote to Hannah: "I have a little publication in hand, very different from the *Estimate* (her new book), but I trust it aims at the same mark. It is extracts from the papers of a woman who died at the age of thirty-seven, and lived for seven or eight years of that time in the humble capacity of a domestic servant in private families. Nothing of it is properly my own, except the preface, in which I venture to challenge the philosophers and wise sceptics of the age to produce such a character among the whole host of those who reject the principles of the gospel."

The little book here referred to by Mr. Newton was a precursor to Legh Richmond's very popular *Dairyman's Daughter*. By a coincidence this little book was lent to me by a collector of old books a few months before I came across this letter, so that I at once recognised to what book he was here referring. The little volume had a great vogue among Mr. Newton's followers

for at least thirty years after its publication, but it contains no hint as to its authorship.

In a letter to Hannah on May 16, 1791, Mr. Newton said : " I was a little indisposed yesterday ; but the Lord enabled me to read prayers and preach twice. Dr. Pulpit is often my best physician, when I am not quite well, nor yet very ill. I was better at night than in the morning." Mr. Newton was then in his sixty-seventh year.

Hannah has this year been reading Mrs. Barbauld's verses on Wilberforce, and we find her recommending them to the notice, first of Mrs. Montagu, and then of Horace Walpole. They were entitled, *Epistle to Wilberforce on the Rejection of the Abolition Bill in* 1791. Mrs. Barbauld was a Unitarian, and Dr. Joseph Priestley was to her something of what John Newton was to Hannah More. As regards spiritual matters, the fundamental beliefs of the two poetesses were so diametrically opposed that there can have been little religious sympathy between them. It says much for Hannah's large-mindedness that the two remained such good friends. Had her religion contracted her naturally large mind, the friendship with Mrs. Barbauld could not have continued any more than that with Mrs. Garrick or Horace Walpole. As a matter of fact, it did continue unbroken till death in all three cases.

But nothing that Hannah could say would persuade Walpole to read Mrs. Barbauld's verses. He replied that he disagreed with her about " Deborah," and added, " I have neither read her verses nor will. As I have not your aspen conscience, I cannot forgive the heart of a woman that is party per pale blood and tenderness, that curses our clergy, and feels for the negroes." He goes on to couple her name with that of Dr. Priestley, and that of Dr. Price, and asks, " Were they ignorant of the atrocious barbarities, injustice, and violating of oaths committed in France ? No ! my good friend,

Deborah[1] may cant rhymes of compassion, but she is a hypocrite, and you shall not make me read her."

We need hardly add that Hannah More was as much shocked at the inhuman behaviour of the French revolutionists as Horace Walpole, and it will always remain a mystery how Mrs. Barbauld and her friends of the "Revolution Society of England" could possibly have found any excuse for their cruel and atrocious butcheries. It was not till the following year that the revolutionists added to their crimes that of shutting the King and Queen of France and their children into one room, and keeping them there without food for twenty-four hours, and then proceeded to murder fifteen hundred persons in one day in cold blood (August 10, 1792).

Sir James Stonehouse, on hearing from Mrs. Trimmer that the sixth edition of *Manners of the Great* was in the press, wrote to Hannah's sister Sally on October 17, that Hannah ought no longer to deny her authorship of it. "Let her fix her name to this edition. Never surely was any little treatise more universally applauded. I hope she is preparing all her works for the press; send volume by volume to Cadell, that there may be no delay in printing. Do not let her stay until she has corrected the whole." Here was another friend who looked with uneasiness on Hannah's devotion of so much time and strength to the schools, as we see from the rest of this letter.

The labouring classes of Birmingham, excited against Dr. Priestley's Unitarian principles, which he had tried to propagate by the publication of no less than thirty tracts, and connecting him in their minds with the Gunpowder Plot, on account of a passage in one of them,[2] had surrounded his house and burnt it down during

[1] He probably called her "Deborah" from her having written so pessimistically about England's future in *Eighteen Hundred and Eleven*.

[2] The passage in which Priestley had excited the mob ran, "We are, as it were, laying gunpowder, grain by grain, under the old building of error and superstition, which a single spark may hereafter inflame."

the Birmingham riots in which some £50,000 of property was destroyed. In a letter to Hannah, the Bishop of London said: "The Birmingham riot was an unfortunate thing. I do not love anything so like the savages and the Poissards of France. Tho mob may sometimes think right, but they always act wrong." He then goes on to ask if Hannah has seen the life of Thomas Paine, and begs her, if she has not seen it, to send for it immediately. "It is curious, entertaining, and authentic," and, with a pamphlet which he enclosed, "the best antidote I have seen to the poison of his publications."

A few days later Mrs. Barbauld wrote to Hannah: "The worthy people whom we call Presbyterians used to decline all celebrations; they never would celebrate the ascension of our Saviour, or the conversion of St. Paul; why then must they commemorate the demolition of the Bastille?"

During the summer months of this year (1791), all four of Hannah's sisters had joined her at Cowslip Green, and had thrown their whole combined energies into the noble work that she had begun the previous autumn. Two mining villages on the Mendip Hills had particularly attracted their attention. "These were ignorant and depraved even beyond those of Cheddar—so ignorant as to imagine that in trying to persuade them to send their children to the newly opened schools, the sisters had the design of making money out of them by selling them as slaves. "The place," says Roberts, "was considered so ferocious that no constable would venture there to execute his office; and these bold instructresses were warned by their friends that they were bringing their own lives into danger. . . . The distance to many of the schools was great; one of them was fifteen miles from their residence, so that they were obliged to sleep in the neighbourhood during the period of their visitation." At Cheddar they also established a weekly school for girls, to teach them reading, sewing, knitting,

and spinning. The spinning however, did not answer—though Hannah had herself gone to almost every clothing town in the vicinity—partly from the exactions of the manufacturer, and partly from its not suiting the genius of the place, as she explained in a letter to Wilberforce.

After the schools had been going for a year, Hannah ventured to have a sermon read after school on Sunday evenings, and while keeping the elder children, also invited the parents to attend. This led to their being taken for Methodists, and they got a few broken windows at first, but they persevered, and were encouraged by many good results. "We now began to distribute Bibles," writes Hannah, "prayer-books, and other good books, but never at random, and only to those who had given some evidence of their loving and deserving them. They are always made the reward of superior learning, or some other merit, as we can have no other proof that they will be read."

The people were so poor that many of them only earned a shilling a day. Hannah soon began to start clubs for the women, as had been done for men in other places. They began with a subscription of three halfpence a week. In some parishes the sisters had a hundred and fifty poor women thus associated, the widows and other very poor women being given their subscription money. They made a rule that every girl bred up in the school, who continued when grown up to attend its instructions, and had married with a fair character, was to be presented on her wedding day with five shillings, a pair of white stockings, and a new Bible. Out of the club sick women received three shillings a week or more according to the circumstances. Hannah often walked ten miles and back to some of the schools, and, as she said, often contrived to get very tired before she came to the field of action.

She thus describes her Mendip Feast given to the

children of the schools on the top of the Mendips in August 1791, in a letter to Mrs. Kennicott: "There were not quite six hundred children, for I would not admit the new schools, telling them they must be good for a year or two to be entitled to so great a thing as a dinner. We had two tents pitched on the hill, our cloth was spread around, and we were enclosed in a fence, within which, in a circle, the children sat. We all went in waggons, and carried a large company of our own to carve for the children, who sang psalms very prettily in the intervals. Curiosity had drawn a great multitude, for a country so thinly peopled; one wondered whence five thousand people, for that was the calculation, could come. I was very uneasy at seeing this, lest it should disturb the decorum of the festivity. Almost all the clergy of the neighbourhood came, and I desired a separate minister to say grace to each parish. At the conclusion I permitted a general chorus of 'God save the King,' telling them that I expected loyalty would make a part of their religion. We all parted with the most perfect peace, having fed about nine hundred people for less than a fine dinner for twenty costs." (The fare consisted of beef, plum-pudding, and cider.)

It is clear throughout that Hannah was always the prominent member of this little coterie of sisters in every movement that required prompt courage, method, and decision, and this leads us to repeat that though, as we have stated already, we think there were many divines who could have written her *Estimate of the Religion of the Fashionable World*, there was perhaps no clergyman living who would have dared to write it. Indeed Mr. Newton says as much in one of his letters to her on the subject: "Zeal, perhaps, sufficient to attempt something in the same way, might be found in many, but other requisites are wanting. If a prudent minister should attempt such an extensive inroad into the kingdom of darkness, he might expect such opposition as few could

withstand. But your sex and your character afford you a peculiar protection. They who would try to trample one of *us* into the dust will be ashamed openly to oppose *you.* I say openly : I believe you do not expect them to thank you, much less assist you. There are those who will probably show their teeth, if they are not permitted to bite."

Mr. Newton's own extraordinary past would have stood in the way of his coming forth as a castigator of London society. He says to Hannah in another letter: " When I look back upon my former state in Africa, and compare it with my present situation . . . there are few instances of the Lord's goodness which affect me more than the pleasing and profitable connections He has afforded me with many who, if they could once have met with such a creature in the street, would have crossed the way to avoid him. That strong feature in the Apostle's picture of human nature : 'hateful and hating one another,' applied emphatically to me. I hated God and His people ; and was in myself more detestable, and what, according to my conduct and deserts was my lot ; I had not a friend upon the earth."

CHAPTER XXIII

THE FRENCH EMIGRANT CLERGY

The new interests and activities that had come into Hannah More's life so filled up her time that she was obliged at last to shorten her periodical visits to London. This she did the more readily because the gaieties in which she had passed so many hours in former years had lost much of their attraction for her. She was now in her forty-eighth year; while in London this winter (1792) she was engrossed in trying to save a poor young heiress, who, as Roberts puts it, had been trepanned away from school at the age of fourteen. Although he gives neither names nor particulars, her biographer hints that there were circumstances which made this tragic event of peculiar interest to Hannah. In any case, she took a very deep interest in the case, and made unwearied attempts to trace the girl and the man who had carried her off. These efforts all proved to be fruitless, however, for the girl had been betrayed into marrying the adventurer, and had been carried off to the Continent.

On April 23 Hannah wrote to Mrs. Kennicott: "My time has been literally passed with thief-takers, officers of justice, and such pretty kind of people. I have made no visits, but snatched a hasty dinner at Cavendish Square, or at London House, in my *déshabille*, and away again, and this only two days ago. So long had I been in town without seeing these dear friends. Others I have not seen. . . . When we had information brought us of any house where our unhappy child and her atrocious companion were supposed to be, Miss M. and I were obliged to go under pretence of wanting

lodgings. One lawyer went with us into the house to look at the rooms, another stood at the door; a hackney coach full of Sir Sampson Wright's men at a little distance; to these we were directed to make signals, in case we had discovered the object of our pursuit; our share in the business being to identify the dear little girl; the lawyers, with all their professional nonchalance, coolly directing us to betray no emotion, nor to discover ourselves, in case we found them. You know, I believe, my silly terror of fire-arms—it is inexpressible. What therefore made these visits so particularly distressing to me was the assurance that P—— never sat without a pistol on the table, which he seized at every noise. Every morning presents some fresh pursuit, and every day closes in disappointment. You may believe that nothing would justify these exertions on our part, but the deepest persuasion of the dear child's innocence. It was the most timid, gentle, pious little thing! How far the endearments and flattery of a wretch who they say is specious may have corrupted her in five weeks, I tremble to think. . . . Diligent pursuit is now being made after them in France." [1]

In a letter to her sister, Hannah says that she feels herself quite an old author, for a copy of *Bishop Bonner's Ghost* has just been sold at De Ort's sale for half-a-guinea, on account of its scarceness. She also mentions the destitute state of De Lorme, the French author of *The Constitution of England*, who is in a state of great destitution. She has herself sent him five guineas anonymously.

A few days later a third case of distress called for Hannah's sympathy and help. She had been invited to a dinner at Lord Fife's to meet Mr. Burke and other eminent men, but she gave it up to perform an errand of mercy. An eye-witness had brought her the news

[1] Horace Walpole alludes to the affair in one of his letters, and speaks of the man who carried off the heiress as being an apothecary.

that morning that a young woman had thrown herself into the canal in St. James's Park in masquerade dress. She was taken up for dead, but by the usual means recovered and was carried to the Middlesex Hospital. Hannah and Mrs. Clarke (sister to Wilberforce) set out then and there to see what could be done. They found that the girl had just been taken off to her lodgings in a street that had a very bad name. They went to the lodgings and inquired for her; she came down to them looking deadly pale, and her beautiful hair was still drenched with water. The two ladies told her they had come as friends, and begged to know how they could help her. She then told them her pitiful story; how her father had sold her, at the age of sixteen, in the King's Bench to a fellow-prisoner, after having given her the education of a lady, which her language and manners confirmed. She said that she was at present under the protection of an officer of the Guards, to whom she was strongly attached; that she had lately found that he neglected her; that he had gone the other night to the masquerade without her, and that suspecting this, she had followed him and seen him there with another woman; she had fallen into fits of hysterics and caused such a commotion that he had been obliged to take her back to her lodgings. The ladies pleaded with her to let them pay her debts and take her away with them, that she might be placed where she could begin a new life, and at last she consented, though in an agony of mind. They got her away, but she would return the next day to see her betrayer once more. They feared she would not come back to them, but she did come, and they put her into rooms near their own, that they might watch over her, for she was but a young girl.

A few weeks later Hannah writes to her sisters from Fulham Palace, where she is on a visit to the Bishop of London: "The Bishop carried me one day to London to hear the King make his speech in the House of Lords."

And she adds that among the ladies she saw the Princess of Stolberg, Countess of Albany, wife to the Pretender sitting just at the foot of the throne, which she might once have expected to have mounted, and she adds: "I have the honour to be reckoned very much like her and this opinion was confirmed yesterday when we met again."

In this connection a remark made by Horace Walpole in a letter to the Misses Berry, dated June 2, is interesting. He says: "Well! I have seen Madame d'Albany who has not a ray of royalty about her. She has good eyes and teeth, but I think can have had no more beauty than remains. She is civil and easy, but German and ordinary."

While Hannah was at Fulham the young girl whom she and Mrs. Clarke had befriended took occasion to disappear. She wrote them a letter lamenting what she called her fate, but said she could not yet resolve on a life of penitence. She begged Hannah to write to her which she did, saying that if ever it should please God to touch her heart, she was to write to her and she would still receive her.

Four years later Hannah received the news that the girl was now being kept by a great lawyer, and that he was putting infidel books into her hand. Even then Hannah continued to hope for her.

It was during this year (1792) that there were grave signs of the revolutionary ideas of the French people beginning to take root in England. Revolutionary books were being published in English, and pamphlets were being circulated to rouse the English lower classes against their rulers. Patriotic Englishmen were becoming alarmed for the safety of their country, and looking round for some way of combatting the influence of the revolutionary literature. The thoughts of many turned to Hannah More, as a writer whose pen might be used in this cause. Letters began to pour in upon her from

eminent persons earnestly begging her to write some popular little tract that might serve as an antidote to the evil influences that were taking such a hold upon the uneducated classes. At first she declined to attempt it, being convinced that no word of hers could stem so powerful a torrent. Turning the matter quietly over, however, she finally decided to try what she could do, without mentioning her attempt to her friends. The result of this effort was a short tract entitled "*Village Politics*. By Will Chip, a country carpenter," addressed to all the mechanics, journeymen, and labourers in Great Britain. In a preface to a later edition of her works Hannah More reminds her readers that *Village Politics* appeared at a time when the country was deluged with tracts subversive of all government, social order, and religion, at a time when Paine and his adherents were dispersing them not only in the cottage and the workshop, but on the public roads, and at the bottom of mines and coal-pits; she also adds that "many of the terms used in the tract in question will happily be unintelligible to readers of a later day; they were at that time only too well understood." I think the lower classes of our day would understand them.

The tract is in the form of a dialogue, between Jack Anvil, the blacksmith, and Tom Hod, the mason, and opens thus:

"*Jack*. What's the matter, Tom? Why dost look so dismal?

Tom. Dismal, indeed! Well enough I may.

Jack. What! is the old mare dead? or work scarce?

Tom. No, no, work's plenty enough, if a man had but the heart to go to it.

Jack. What book art reading? Why dost look so like a hang-dog?

Tom (looking on his book). Cause enough. Why, I find here that I'm very unhappy, and very miserable, which I should never have known if I had not had the

good luck to meet with this book. O, 'tis a precious book!

Jack. A good sign, though, that you can't find out you're unhappy without looking into a book for it! What is the matter?

Tom. Matter? Why, I want liberty.

Jack. Liberty! That's bad indeed! What! has any one fetched a warrant for thee? Come, man, cheer up, I'll be bound for thee. Thou art an honest fellow in the main, though thou dost tipple and prate a little too much at the Rose and Crown.

Tom. No, no; I want a new constitution.

Jack. Indeed! Why, I thought thou hadst been a desperate healthy fellow. Send for the doctor directly.

Tom. I'm not sick; I want liberty and equality, and the rights of man.

Jack. O, now I understand thee. What! thou art a leveller and a republican, I warrant!

Tom. I'm a friend of the people. I want a reform.

Jack. Then the shortest way is to mend thyself.

Tom. But I want a *general* reform."

. . . . . .

So anxious was Hannah to conceal the authorship of *Village Politics* that, instead of sending it to her own publisher, she sent it secretly to a firm with whom she had had no literary transactions. She had not long to wait for a result, for within three days of its publication every post from London brought her copies from various friends, with entreaties that she would use every means in her power to circulate it. "It flew," writes her biographer, "with a rapidity which may appear incredible to those whose memories do not reach back to that period, into every part of the kingdom. Many thousands were sent to Scotland and Ireland. Numerous patriotic persons printed large editions of it at their own expense; and in London only, many hundred thousand were soon circulated."

It was not long, however, before internal evidence betrayed the authorship of this powerful little tract, and Hannah More was soon overwhelmed with friendly congratulations.

The Bishop of London wrote to her from Fullham:

"My dear Madam,—*Village Politics* is universally extolled, it has been read and greatly admired at Windsor, and its fame is spreading rapidly over all parts of the kingdom. I gave one to the Attorney-General, who has recommended it to the Association at the Crown-and-Anchor, which will disperse it through the country. Mr. Cambridge says that Swift could not have done it better. I am perfectly of that opinion. It is a masterpiece of its kind. . . . Your sincere and faithful

"B. London."

Hannah gave her own opinion of the tract in a letter to Mrs. Boscawen: "In an evil hour, against my will and judgment, on one sick day, I scribbled a little pamphlet called *Village Politics*. . . . It is as vulgar as heart could wish; but it is only designed for the most vulgar class of readers. I heartily hope I shall not be discovered, as it is a sort of writing repugnant to my nature; though indeed it is rather a question of peace than of politics!"

In the same letter Hannah confides to her friend that she cannot bear to look at pictures of the guillotine, and adds, "I can generalise misery with as much comfort as another; but there is something in detail and actual representation which I cannot stand."

On reading a speech that had been made by Citizer Dupont at the National Convention at Paris on December 14, 1792, against giving a religious education to the youth of his country, Hannah More burned with righteous indignation. Feeling that such poison ought not to be poured into English ears without a corrective, she at

once set about writing a pamphlet entitled, *Remarks on the Speech of M. Dupont.*

On August 21 Horace Walpole, now the Earl of Orford, wrote Hannah a long letter recounting some of the horrible deeds freshly committed by the French revolutionists, including the butchering in cold blood of hecatombs of house porters, for the sole reason that they were called *Le Suisse.* He adds: "But it is better to thank Providence for the tranquillity and happiness we enjoy in this country, in spite of the philosophising serpents we have in our bosom, the Paines, the Tookes, and the Wollstonecrafts. I am glad you have not read the tract of the last-mentioned writer. I would not look at it though assured that it contained neither metaphysics nor politics, but as she entered the lists in the latter, and borrowed her title from the demon's book, which aimed at spreading the wrongs of men, she is excommunicated from the pale of my library." This is an allusion to Mary Wollstonecraft's book, *The Rights of Women.* There is little doubt that this book would have met with a much more favourable reception had its author not previously identified herself with those who applauded the French butcheries. We have reason to believe that Hannah More read it later on, and that it had some influence on her own book on the Woman Question, to which we shall refer in another place.

Hannah was stimulated in her design of replying to the blasphemous speech of M. Dupont by her wish to do something to relieve the terrible distress of the seven thousand French priests who had been driven by the Revolution from their own country, and were taking refuge in England in a state of the utmost destitution. The sisters had thrown their house open to the unfortunate men, and had them daily at their own table. Hannah determined to devote all profit from this pamphlet to a fund for their relief, and prefixed to it a short appeal

to the ladies of England entreating them to deny themselves some little luxuries, that they might help the French clergy, who were actually in want of bread to eat. She begged for the "economy of a feather," and pointed out that the money raised for their relief would not be taken out of the country, but would return again to the community—it would return to English shops and markets to procure the necessities of life.

The profits of the pamphlet, which sold at half-a-crown, soon amounted to £240, and the United Committee of Subscribers for the Relief of the Suffering Clergy of France sent her a unanimous vote of thanks for it on April 15, 1793.

In the speech referred to, M. Dupont had asserted that there was no God, and his assertion had been received with almost universal applause by his admiring audience. "Nature and reason, these ought to be the Gods of men! These are my Gods!" he had cried. "And you legislators, if you desire that the French people should be happy, make haste to propagate these principles, and to teach them in your primary schools, instead of those fanatical principles that have hitherto been taught . . . all these prejudices must fall at the same time. We must destroy them, or they will destroy us. . . ."

Hannah More's reply to this speech is masterly; it is vigorous, scathing, virile, and goes straight to the point. We regret that we can give but a short extract from it here.

"It never occurs to them that those defects of old institutions are equally palpable to all other men. It never occurs to them that frenzy can demolish faster than wisdom can build; that pulling down the strongest edifice is far more easy than the reconstruction of the meanest; that the most ignorant labourer is competent to the one, while for the other, the skill of the architect and the patient industry of the workman must

unite ; that a sound judgment will profit by the errors of our predecessors, as well as by their excellencies ; that there is a retrospective wisdom to which much of our prospective wisdom owes its birth."

"That atheism," she continues, "will be the favoured and the popular tenet in France seems highly probable ; whilst in that wild contempt of all religion, which has lately had the arrogance to call itself toleration, it is not improbable that Christianity itself may be tolerated in that country, as a sect not persecuted, perhaps, but derided. It is, however, far from clear that this will be the case if the new doctrines should become generally prevalent. Atheists are not without their bigotry ; they too have their spirit of exclusion and monopoly in a degree not inferior to the most superstitious monks. And that very spirit of intolerance which is now so much the object of their invective would probably be no less the rule of their practice, if their will should ever be backed by power. It is true that Voltaire and the other great apostles of infidelity have employed all the acuteness of their wit to convince us that irreligion never persecutes. . . . If this unsupported assertion be true, then ecclesiastical history is a series of falsehoods, and the *Book of Martyrs* a legend of romance."

In the spring of this year (1793) the Bishop of London wrote to Hannah : "Mr. Paley's book has been universally well received, and the first edition has already gone. As he wrote and published it at my desire, I have given him a prebend of St. Paul's as a mark of my approbation and gratitude. It has given me much pleasure to find that it has been much read at Cambridge, where I think it will do essential service."

It is instructive to note in this connection that had there been no French Revolution there would, humanly speaking, have been no *Paley's Evidences*.

It was during August of this year that Hannah wrote the letter to the Earl of Orford which has done her so

much harm in the judgment of the thinking women of our day, and, with all my admiration for Hannah More, I am very sorry that she ever wrote it, though it was true enough of the women of her day. I allude to her remark, "To be unstable and capricious is, I really think, but too characteristic of our sex; and there is perhaps no animal so much indebted to subordination for its good behaviour as woman." We must take it, however, with a grain of salt; we must remember that the women of Hannah More's day were with very rare exceptions a class of animal that owed a very great deal to subordination. I believe that if our authoress had but inserted the words "as they now are," even the most advanced women of the twentieth century would have agreed with her entirely.

Three opposing pamphlets attacking Hannah's *Remarks on the Speech of M. Dupont* soon appeared; the first of these accused her of opposing God's vengeance against popery, by wickedly wishing that the French priests should not be starved; the second attempted to justify Dupont, and the third accused Hannah of favouring the old popish massacres.

The phenomenal success of *Village Politics* gave Hannah More the idea that she might use her power of appealing to the lower classes by writing a series of tracts suitable to their limited education and understanding. She followed out the suggestion by projecting the publication of a series of *Cheap Repository Tracts*. Other literary friends joined her in the work, with the result that for the next three years three instructive little tales appeared monthly. Among the friends who contributed to the expenses of the undertaking were the Duke of Gloucester, brother of the King, and Bishop Porteus.

In a letter to Mrs. Boscawen in November (1793) Hannah wrote: "The object for the leading tract for the next month is the bad economy of the poor; and I have been led to it by repeated applications in news-

papers. I have endeavoured to show them that their distresses arise nearly as much from their own bad management as from the hardness of the times. It is called *The Way of Plenty*." This tract was filled with good receipts for making cheap and wholesome dishes.

The next year (1794) was devoted by Hannah entirely to this work and her schools. She could not spare the time to go to London in the winter, as had been her custom for so many years, and there is practically no record of her doings except a few remarks in a private diary which she kept this year. Her idea as to the duty of a Christian had become more and more strict. In one of the entries we find: "It is now, I think, five or six years since I have been enabled by the grace of God in a great degree to give up all human studies. I have not allowed myself to read any classic or pagan author for many years—I mean by myself; yet these are but small sacrifices that I am called to make." We cannot, however, take this to mean that she believed it wrong to read classic or pagan authors, for in her works of a later date she strongly recommends many of them to young readers. This is one of the many passages that occur in every biography which if taken separately can be made to mean something quite different from that which the writer intended.

It was since the establishment of Mr. Raikes's Sunday-schools and other institutions for teaching the poor to read, that the great need for pure literature for the lower classes had arisen. The *Cheap Repository* literature which Hannah and her friends now produced was especially intended to meet this new need. Every month stories, ballads, and articles for Sunday reading now appeared regularly, but the expenses being heavy, Hannah found she would not be able to continue her new work without subscriptions to support it. As soon as she appealed for money it came. The scheme progressed, and in the first year two million of these tracts were sold. For three

years Hannah persevered, giving to the composition of the tracts that time and strength which, if applied to a higher kind of literary work, would have greatly increased her fame and her income. To herself the undertaking meant pecuniary loss as well as cessation of gain, for the tracts, with all the help given, never succeeded in paying their way on account of the nominal price at which they were offered to the public. At the end of the third year their popularity among all classes of society had become so great that Hannah decided to bring them out in three well-bound volumes. In 1795 she wrote to her sister from London : " I am afraid we shall be ruined by the very success of our tracts. Cadell says he would not stand in my shoes at the end of the year for five hundred pounds over and above the subscription ; nay, according to another calculation, a thousand pounds would not do it at any rate."

Of the half-dozen ballads contributed by Mr. Mason (Gray's biographer) Hannah rejected several, some because they had too much politics, and some because they had too much love. One of the ballads from her own pen was called *Turn the Carpet*, and was meant to vindicate the justice of God in the apparently unequal distribution of goods in this world. When she showed it to the Bishop of London, he laughingly said, " Here you have Bishop Butler's *Analogy*, all for a halfpenny."

A missionary in Madras had put some of the tracts into the hands of the Rajah of Tanjore. The Rajah preferred them to the *Rambler*, which somebody had given him, and declared he liked Mrs. More's works better than any he had ever read. The missionary in question told Lady Waldegrave that he had himself often taken sermons from the *Estimate of the Religion of the Fashionable World*, without knowing who was the author of it.

In 1795, when on one of her visits to London, Hannah More was presented by the Duchess of Gloucester to Princess Sophia and Prince William. " The manners of

these two young personages were very agreeable," writes Hannah. "They found many kind things to say to me, and conversed with the greatest sweetness and familiarity. I strongly recommended Mr. Gisborne's book. The Duchess quoted *The Shepherd of Salisbury Plain* two or three times, and told me of a little adventure she had had. She desired Lady Mary Mordaunt (one of her ladies of the bed-chamber), to stop an orange-woman and ask her if she ever sold ballads. 'No, indeed,' said the woman, 'I don't do anything so mean. I don't even sell apples.' This diverted them, as they did not know there were so many ranks and gradations in life."

The sequel to the story was that the woman was persuaded to sell some of Hannah's little books, and soon returned to show the royal ladies two shillings she had earned by her new trade.

Lord Orford (Horace Walpole) began to tease Hannah about the strictness of her tracts, and the cruelty of making the poor spend so much time in reading books. Whereupon Hannah recommended him to read Law's *Serious Call*, a book which his friend Gibbon had highly praised, and she reminded him that Law had once been Gibbon's tutor.

In the same letter she writes that her kind friend Mrs. Garrick is very angry with her for curtailing her visits to her, but that she does not feel she has any right to steal time from her new occupation even for so old a friend.

It was in this year (1795) that Lord Orford presented Hannah with a copy of Bishop Wilson's edition of the Bible (in three volumes), superbly bound in morocco. He had written inside it a long dedication, which we would give here but for lack of space, and it is a particularly appropriate one.

In the spring of 1796 we find Hannah reading the *Life of Gibbon*. That writer had died two years previously. "It will disappoint two sorts of readers," she writes to

her sister, "for it is neither very wicked nor very entertaining, but rather dull, and on the whole rather harmless; nay, even instructive, as it shows the discomfort of his principles."

In the same letter she tells that Bishop Percy had begun to talk to her one day on the new spurious Shakespeare, but that she had replied that she had left off poetry; and had no curiosity about this great literary fraud.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE WOMAN QUESTION

For three years Hannah More had devoted all her time and all her energies to writing stories and ballads for the lower classes, and she had not worked in vain. The Bishop of London wrote to her on January 16, 1797: "The sublime and immortal publication of the *Cheap Repository* I hear of from every quarter of the globe. To the West Indies I have sent ship-loads of them. They are read with avidity at Sierra Leone, and I hope our pious Scotch missionaries will introduce them into Asia."

Early in the spring of this year Hannah received the news of the death of her friend Lord Orford (Horace Walpole). Writing to her sister from London, she said: "Poor Lord Orford, I could not help mourning for him as if I had not expected it. But twenty years' unclouded kindness and pleasant correspondence cannot be given up without emotion. I am not sorry now that I never flinched from any of his ridicule or attacks, or suffered them to pass without rebuke. At our last meeting I made him promise to read Law's *Serious Call.* His playful wit, his various knowledge, his polished manners, alas! what avail they now! The most serious thoughts are awakened. Oh, that he had known and believed the things that belong to his peace!"

Wilberforce had recently published his book with the long title, usually shortened into *A Practical View of Real Christianity,* and of it Hannah now writes: "All agree that it is well written; that it is a very able book; even some worldly people admire it highly." In Wilberforce's book there is little that had not been said more

powerfully and tersely by Hannah in one or other of her now numerous publications on the subject of religion. He attacks Sabbath-breaking, theatre-going, and duelling, much in the same way, only rather less forcibly, than Hannah had done. On the last-mentioned custom, he writes: "This practice, while it powerfully supports, mainly rests on that excessive overvaluation of character which teaches that worldly credit is to be preferred at any rate, and disgrace at any rate to be avoided. The unreasonableness of duelling has often been proved, and it has often been shown to be criminal on various principles. It is a deliberate preference of the favour of man, before the favour and approbation of God, *in articulo mortis*, in an instance where our own life and that of a fellow-creature is at stake, and wherein we run the risk of running into the presence of our Maker in the very act of offending Him. . . . He cannot be esteemed innocent of this crime, who lives in a settled habitual determination to commit it when circumstances shall call upon him to do so. This is a consideration which places the crime of duelling on a different footing from any other. Indeed there is no other in which mankind habitually and deliberately resolve to practise whenever the temptation shall occur."

Another old friend who passed away this spring was Edmund Burke. In May 1798 the Misses Berry published a volume of Horace Walpole's Letters, including those written to Hannah More, and accompanied by her portrait. On receiving a copy, Hannah observed that she was the only survivor of all the correspondents whose letters were included.

On May 31 she writes to her sisters: "Were you not all well-nigh out of your wits at Pitt's duel? We were all in the utmost consternation, especially poor Mr. Wilberforce. It was no small consolation to us all that he had borne his testimony against duelling so strongly in his book previous to this shocking event.

What a dreadful thing that a life of such importance should be risked (or indeed any life at all) on the miserable notion of false honour! To complete the horror, too, they chose a Sunday." In this letter she adds that Mr. Wilberforce, who has just come from the House, tells her he has given notice that he shall make a motion for some measures to be taken to put a stop to the impious and detestable practice of duelling. It is a bold step! May God grant it success."

In the year 1799 Hannah More published her third prose work, under the title of *Strictures on Female Education,* which her biographer calls "one of her most powerful pieces of artillery against the towers of fashionable abuses and follies." The book met with a most warm reception, especially from the upper classes of society, though a fashionable lady was heard to say, "Everybody will read her, everybody admire her, and nobody mind her."

This book is Hannah More's contribution to the Woman Question. It should be found in every library of books devoted to that subject, and, if a special place need be assigned to it, we would place it next on the shelf to Mary Wollstonecraft's *Rights of Women.*[1]

In this book, and especially in her opening chapter, Hannah More addresses women of rank and fortune, and points out how their influence may be used for the good of others. They should not compare themselves with the less favoured women of other nations, but with what they themselves have the power of becoming. She is thinking doubtless of Mary Wollstonecraft when she rebukes the female polemic, as "one who wanders far from the limits prescribed to her sex."

Hannah More approaches the Woman Question from the standpoint of a Christian moralist. It is not so much woman's rights and wrongs that she discusses, but her duties—her duties as a Christian. This is where she

[1] Written seven years earlier.

differs from Mary Wollstonecraft. She writes as a humble exponent of Christ's teaching. Had she lived in our own day she certainly would not have been among those women who wish to check the advancement of her sex; at the same time I think we may safely surmise that she would not have joined any of "the militant parties." She would have joined the moderates.

Mental softness in a woman was something of which Hannah More expressed the strongest disapproval. Charles Burney, after reading her book, wrote her a long letter, in which he remarked, with regard to this subject: "What you have said of mental female softness puts me in mind of Johnson's reply to Mrs. Thrale, who was defending a lady whom he had accused of several species of affectation, by saying, 'But she is soft.' 'Yes, madam,' answered Johnson, 'and so is a pillow.'"

Mrs. Kennicott wrote to Hannah: "I think the highest of your triumphs that has come to my knowledge has been over a man, who, I believe, holds our understandings in contempt and our writings in abhorrence; he first read your book, and then recommended it. I saw Princess Elizabeth when I passed through Windsor. She read to me a letter from Princess Royal, in which she speaks in high terms of your book—says she has the satisfaction of agreeing with you in most points, and hopes to make much use of it in the education of her daughters."

Mr. Pepys wrote to her: "I have heard but of one lady who is determined not to read your book, and the reason which she gives is, that as she has settled her habits, she does not want to be reasoned out of what she cannot alter."

The Bishop of Lincoln wrote: "I have no daughters to be benefited, but I am confident my sons will have better wives. No age owed more to a female pen than to yours. All your exertions tend to the same point—the cause of virtue and religion."

Bishop Porteus wrote to tell her that a half-crown pamphlet, full of "gross and coarse ribaldry, rancour, and profaneness," had been published in reply to her book. He advised her to let it sink under its own weight.

In Hannah More's book there is no reproach cast at the other sex for keeping woman in subjection, neither is there any demand for rights withheld, yet it drew down upon its author a storm of virulent abuse. Her chapter on the natural corruption of the human heart, and her rebuke to mothers for sending their little children to "Baby Balls," seem to have been those which gave the most offence.

The chief value of the book to readers of our own day is the peep it gives us into the life lived by our great-grandmothers. It appears that every young lady of that day, no matter whether she loved or hated music, whether she was musical or had absolutely no ear at all, was expected to devote at least four hours a day, and generally five, to the practice of the piano (or rather spinet), and this, not with a view to her becoming a teacher or a public performer, but simply that she might make a fair show in the marriage market, it being the regular thing to drop all music after the marriage knot had been safely tied. Hannah More pointed out how much it would conduce to the happiness of married life if the wife came to her new sphere with a head stored with good things gained by thoughtful reading instead of bringing an empty head and the best musical technique.

If Hannah More could pay us a visit in the second decade of the twentieth century, would she find the generality of women in the upper classes better read? Would she find that her sex had made so very considerable a step in advance in a hundred and twenty years? Not if she judged their progress by the mental pabulum offered to her sex in the Women's Page of our best

newspapers! Not if she judged it by the literature she found enjoying the greatest circulation among them!

In a way Hannah More is with us still. As I am concluding this very chapter a proof is furnished to me. I find that the quotation for this week, printed in large letters on the calendar for 1911 that hangs above my table, is from Hannah More, and, what is a still stranger coincidence, it is taken from her book on women:

"The roses of Pleasure seldom last long enough to adorn the brow of him who plucks them; for they are the only roses which do not retain their sweetness after they have lost their beauty."

The calendar in question is an American one, and was sent me all the way from New York by an American friend who had no idea of my taking any interest at all in Hannah More, and certainly never dreamed that I was writing about her.

When, towards the middle of the nineteenth century, Charlotte Yonge wanted to publish her first book, her family opposed the idea as unfeminine, and held a solemn council to discuss the matter before they would allow her to do so. Her biographer tells us that in consenting they only did so with the understanding that she was not to take money for it, it being thought unladylike to benefit by one's own writings. This does not indicate any great advance in the emancipation of English-women in the two generations that followed that of Hannah More.

CHAPTER XXV

PERSECUTION

The schools started by Hannah More and her sisters had now been in existence for several years, and their usefulness had been amply proved by the great change for the better in the children who had passed through them, many of whom had grown into respectable young men and women. Some of these had turned out so well that they were in their turn appointed as teachers. The Friendly Societies and Clubs started soon after the schools had also done well, and been of the greatest use to the parishes in which they had been established.

Seeing all this, Mr. Bere, the curate of Blagdon, the parish in which Cowslip Green was situated, called upon the sisters and earnestly begged them to open a school in his parish. This they at first declined to do, as they did not feel their strength equal to the exertion, nor were their purses equal to the expense it would entail. Mr. Bere was not willing, however, to take their refusal as final, and he soon afterwards sent a deputation of churchwardens to beg them "to be pleased to come and do our parish a little good."

At length the ladies yielded, and began work by sending there one of the masters from the other schools, and collecting together two hundred children, whom they found in a state of the greatest ignorance and neglect. They also started Sunday readings at Blagdon, as these had been so beneficial in the other parishes. The adults as well as the children came in crowds, and the minister and his wife were generally present themselves. Within three years from this beginning Hannah

More received a letter from Mrs. Bere, the clergyman's wife, telling her that "the two sessions and the two assizes were past, and a third was approaching, and neither as prosecutor nor prisoner, plaintiff nor defendant, had any of that parish (once so notorious for crimes and litigations) appeared. Warrants for wood-stealing and other pilferings were becoming quite out of fashion."

Martha More wrote in her journal: "On our return to the country we found Blagdon in a steady, uniform course of improvement, in morals as well as in religious knowledge. The evening reading was very affecting; the whole people stood up, and with the modesty and simplicity of children, suffered the schoolmaster to tell us the particulars of their behaviour during our absence. It was an extraordinary proceeding, for the parish officers were among their number. It was at the desire also of the justice himself (the curate of Blagdon before mentioned) that we were publicly informed of the very decorous behaviour of the men on the day of their club-meeting."

It is not very clear when, or why, Mr. Bere turned against the ladies he had invited to work in his parish, but he did turn against them, and became a bitter and cruel enemy. He and his friends began to persecute her and her sisters in 1800 with all sorts of false accusations; and their persecution went on uninterruptedly for three years. Hannah More was charged with fanaticism, with introducing Methodism, with teaching Calvinism, with holding unsound political principles, with sympathising with the French in their designs against England, with establishing seminaries of vice; in short, as Hannah herself expressed it, there was scarcely any motive so pernicious, or any hypocrisy so deep, to which her plans had not been attributed. The school at Blagdon was closed by Hannah and her sisters when they found that it was not approved of by the clergyman of

the parish, though after he had thrown out insinuations against it from his pulpit he had begged them to go on with it.

In a long letter to the Bishop of Bath and Wells, in 1801, Hannah mentions Mr. Bere's having charged the schoolmaster she had placed at Blagdon with showing a tendency to fanaticism, and she says: "I was highly displeased with Young [1] when I found he had allowed two or three of these silly people to attempt extempore prayer. That vulgar people will be vulgar in their religion, and that illiterate people will talk ignorantly, who will deny? But this had nothing to do with my very large Sunday-school, where I never heard that any impropriety was complained of. No such complaint has ever reached me from any of my other schools. Young profited so well by my reprimand for this measure that his conduct was ever after perfectly correct." Hannah tells the Bishop that it was after she had removed her school from Blagdon that the most hostile of Mr. Bere's pamphlets was published.

"It has been repeatedly said," she goes on, "that, being a Calvinist myself, I always employ Calvinistic teachers. I never knowingly employed one. As to Calvinism and Arminianism, I should be very sorry if such terms were known in my schools, it never having been my object to teach dogmas and opinions, but to train up good members of society, and plain, practical Christians. I have discharged two teachers for discovering a tendency to enthusiasm, and one for being accused of it, without discovering such tendency." We may observe that the word "enthusiasm," as here used, and as it was understood in the time of Addison, had a somewhat different meaning from what we now understand by it; it stood for what we now describe as fanaticism, or "ranting."

[1] One of the charges against Young was that he had been heard to pray extempore in private.

The next paragraph in Hannah's letter to the Bishop is interesting when we remember that she was a personal friend and a strong admirer of the Wesleys. She tells how, on an inferior teacher being wanted in one of the schools, under an excellent mistress, the clergyman ventured to appoint "a poor man of the parish, from having observed his constant attendance at church, and his good moral conduct, though he went to the Methodist meeting. He earnestly hoped that from the man's soberness of mind, and regularity at church, he might become entirely detached from the Methodist societies, and be the instrument of detaching others also; but not finding this to be the case, the minister who had engaged him was convinced of the expediency of his removal, and dismissed him with my full concurrence. . . . The Methodists are in general hostile to my schools, for attracting, as they say, the people from them to the church, and I have been assured that some of their preachers have inveighed against me by name in their sermons."

Hannah tells the Bishop that one of her schools has been charged with having prayed for the success of the French. "To perversions of this sort I am almost daily accustomed," she adds.

Because she would not let the poor women bring their crying infants into the school, she was charged with wishing, not to instruct the children, but to pervert the adults! Conversations were printed which had never taken place, and with people she had never met. She tells the Bishop: "I am accused of being the abettor, not only of fanaticism and sedition, but of thieving and prostitution. To all these accusations or innuendoes I have never answered one word."

Hannah More was reviled in one pamphlet as an enemy to liberty; in another as being disaffected to Church and State, in another of being a ministerial hireling and a tool of Government. In yet another she was accused

of delighting in war; and one writer asserted that she did not believe one word of Christianity.[1]

In our day of Salvation Armies, Church Armies, and the like institutions the following paragraph in Hannah More's long letter to the Bishop reads curiously. She says: "I need not inform your lordship why the illiterate, when they become religious, are more liable to enthusiasm than the better informed. They have also a coarse way of expressing their religious sentiments, which often appears to be enthusiasm when it is only vulgarity or quaintness. But I am persuaded your lordship will allow that this does not furnish a reason why the poor should be left destitute of religious instruction. . . . I do not vindicate enthusiasm—I dread it. But can the possibility that a few should become enthusiasts be justly pleaded as an argument for giving them all up to actual vice and barbarism?"

It was asserted in one of the pamphlets against her that her writings ought to be burned by the hands of the common hangman.

Hannah concluded her letter to the Bishop by saying that if it was his will that she should abolish the rest of her schools she would lament his decision but obey it, adding: "My deep reverence for the laws and institutions of my country inspires me with a proportionate veneration for all constituted authorities, whether in Church or State. If I be not permitted to employ the short remnant of my life (which has been nearly destroyed by these prolonged attacks) in being in any small measure and degree actively useful . . . I will at least set my accusers an example of obedience to those superiors whom the providence of God has set over me, and whom, next to Him, I am bound to obey."

The letter from which we have been quoting occupies

[1] The list of these pamphlets in the British Museum Catalogue fills a long column.

no less than fifteen closely written pages of Hannah More's biography.

The Bishop's reply was a very short but friendly one. So far from wishing her remaining schools abolished, he heartily wished them success and wrote with the highest approval of the good they were doing.

The writer of one of the most virulent pamphlets against the schools sent the money he made by it to the Bath Hospital, and the governors actually received it, as she wrote in her diary, "with a view to inflict public disgrace upon me." She at once made an alteration in her will that she might leave a legacy to Bath Hospital as a token that she had forgiven the governors.

In another part of her diary Hannah makes a comment to the effect that Baxter had fifty books written against him, while twenty-three had been written for or against her, besides three years' monthly attacks from the *Anti-jacobin*. "But while Baxter blessed God that none of these things disturbed him, I have to lament that through my want of his faith and piety, they had nearly destroyed my life." She alludes to a long and dangerous illness brought on by the incessant worry of these cruel attacks.

At one time the persecution had been so violent that a rumour reached the ears of her friend the Bishop of London that her enemies were preparing means to have her publicly tried and sent to prison. He wrote to her sister Martha about it, fearing to mention such a suggestion to Hannah direct.

We are glad to be able to relate that in 1805 Hannah was able to report to her friends that no less than four of her assailants had been tried in the Court of the King's Bench for libel and found guilty.

After a long and serious illness which lasted nearly two years, Hannah was once more restored to health. In October of that year she and her sisters held the twentieth anniversary of the opening of the schools at

Cheddar. One of those first children was now a respected and industrious sergeant, of whom an officer of his regiment told Hannah he was one of the greatest masters of military tactics they had. "Judge of our pleasure," she writes to Wilberforce, "to see him at Weymouth in full regimentals, acting as paymaster and sergeant-major! There was a sort of review. Everybody praised the training of eight hundred men so well disciplined; the officers said they were fit for any service. One of them said to us: 'It is all owing to the great abilities and industry of Sergeant Hill. . . . At first he was so religious that we thought him a Methodist, but we find him so good a soldier, and so correct in his morals, that we now do not trouble ourselves about his religion. He will probably be adjutant on the first vacancy.'"

Some nine years before the anniversary above mentioned, Hannah More had told Wilberforce in one of her letters that some farmers in a parish adjoining that in which she had one of her schools had been to consult a fortune-teller, "to know if we were Methodists, and if our school is Methodistical. The oracle returned an ambiguous answer, and desired to know what reason they had for suspecting it; the farmers replied, it was because we sung Watt's hymns. The sage returned for answer, this was no proof; had they no better reason? Yes, they answered, 'for if the hymns were not Methodistical, the tunes were.' The Pythian asked why they were so. The reply was, 'Because they were not in Farmer Clap's book.'"

The poet Cowper died in May 1800, and his friend Mr. Newton, then in his seventy-seventh year, preached his funeral sermon, choosing his text from Ecclesiastes ii. 2, 3. Writing to Hannah More afterwards, he said: "Why was he, who both by talents and disposition seemed qualified, if it were possible, to reform the age in which he lived, harassed by distresses and despair, so

that the bush which Moses saw all in flames was a fit emblem of his case ? "

Hannah read Hayley's *Life of Cowper* with great interest, and wrote in her diary : " I was disappointed to find so few of his religious letters printed. The biographer seems to forget, or not to know, that religion was the grand feature, the turning-point, in the character of Cowper. It was difficult to write his life truly, and yet tenderly. . . . The letters wind about the heart, and captivate the affections by their natural feeling, truth, elegance, and simplicity."

In the year 1802 Hannah gave up her pretty home at Cowslip Green and moved, together with her four sisters, into a new home they had built for themselves about a mile distant, and which they called Barley Wood. The house stood in a picturesque garden, which was laid out and planted by the ladies themselves. It was destined to be the last earthly home of all the sisters except one, and that one was Hannah.

Writing from Barley Wood to a friend soon after they had moved in, Hannah said : " In answer to your kind hint about my coming to town, I ought to tell you that I have long resolved not to come at all. Battered, hacked, scalped, tomahawked, as I have been for three years, and continue to be, brought out every month as an object of scorn and abhorrence, I seem to have nothing to do in the world. . . . I try to indulge neither resentment nor misanthropy. I pray for my enemies, who are very low and very wretched. I have learnt the true value of human opinion. . . . From long habit, it will seem odd, after never having omitted going to London for thirty years, to discontinue it, but I think I am right. I have in that long period been spoilt for ordinary society, but am not so nice as I used to be, and there are always duties enough to do if one will but do them. I have, I fear, been too much addicted to choosing the pleasantest. My remaining domestic duties threaten to be of a more

trying kind ; pray for me, both of you, that my faith fail not."

The domestic duties to which she was now looking forward were chiefly those of helping to make happy the declining years of her three elder sisters. The above letter, written by any ordinary woman, would have meant that she was now resigned to the inevitable inactivity of old age, but Hannah was no ordinary woman, and her work was, we may say, only half done ; though she was almost sixty years of age, she had yet to write six of her most popular books.

Retirement at Barley Wood, with the renunciation of her annual visit to London, meant a great deal to one so passionately fond of intellectual intercourse as Hannah More. A few years later she wrote to a friend : " As to the common intercourse of life, it seems to me that I might have walked up and down St. James's Street all my life with Florio, for any use that literature is in conversation, but it is my great delight when alone, and that is much more important." The fact was, she had now to pass most of her time in the society of friends who were not themselves reading people, and to have discussed books with people who never read them would have been hopeless, and would only have brought against her the charge of pedantry.

As soon as she was settled at Barley Wood the world broke in upon her from every quarter. Her biographer regrets that her celebrity should have led to such an influx of letters as to require the sacrifice of a great deal of her time to answering them.

Many of her older friends were disappearing one by one. Her publisher Cadell, with whom she had set out on her literary career twenty-eight years before, died this year, also her friends Lady Aylesbury and Owen Cambridge.

When she had no one with whom to discuss the books she was reading, Hannah sometimes wrote down her

thoughts about them in her diary. Here is an entry for February 3, 1803: "Finished Blatrie's *Life of Julian*, which has given me a far juster view of that apostate's character than Ammianus, Warburton, or Gibbon; less partial than the one—less prejudiced than the others. Mrs. A. Addington lent it to me to read, with a view to comparing his character with that of Buonaparte. Certain points of resemblance are very striking—their vanity, hypocrisy, and affectation. The author has proved what he undertook to prove, that he was not a great, but a singular man."

Here is another entry, March 15: "Finished this day, for the second time, Bishop Horne's *Paraphrase of the Psalms*. A work of great edification, and of a sweet and devout spirit. I do not know any book that has greater unction and savour of piety. Only one thing surprises me, that this excellent man falls into the common error of mistaking baptism for regeneration. Surely it is confounding the outward and visible sign with the inward and spiritual grace."

In the autumn of that year a lady came to consult her about starting a school for young ladies, and she wrote in her diary: "To teach a teacher is laying out knowledge on the best interest; such seed may be productive of much fruit."

In January 1804 the Bishop of London wrote to her that the French were now in a state of perfect preparation for invading England. A little later there was a rumour that French troops might land at Uphill, a spot only twelve miles distant from Barley Wood, and Hannah More was resolved to give Barley Wood up to the English officers should they require it in the event of an invasion. On January 21, 1806, she wrote to Mr. Knox: "Is it a matter of comfort or alarm that we are to have forty thousand Russians to assist John Bull in defending himself at home?"

On March 7, 1804, Hannah wrote in her diary: "My

diary is here interrupted, and may be for a long time ; the idea has been suggested to me to write a pamphlet on the education of a certain royal personage. I am unequal to it, yet they tell me it is a duty to attempt it ; I feel reluctant, but no irksomeness in the task should prevent me, if I dared hope I could do any good."

CHAPTER XXVI

EDUCATION OF AN HEIR TO THE THRONE

While on a visit to the Bishop of London, at Fulham Palace, Hannah had spent a morning at the Pavilion at Hampton Court with the Duchess of Gloucester, and another at Carlton House in the company of the little Princess Charlotte, then a pretty little girl of three, and looked upon by the British people as their future Queen-regnant. For the entertainment of her visitors the baby princess was made to recite "How doth the Busy Bee," to dance, and to sing "God Save the King." Hannah wrote to her sisters: "Her understanding is so forward that they really might begin to teach her many things. It is perhaps the highest praise, after all, to say that she is exactly like the child of a private gentleman, wild and natural, but sensible, lively, and civil."

The little Princess Charlotte of Wales was just eight years old when Hannah More produced, in the year 1805, her book with the ponderous title, *Hints towards forming the Character of a Young Princess*. Her biographer informs us that it was written at the earnest request of a dignitary of the Church. The Princess was at that time solely under the care of ladies, no preceptor having been appointed when the book was begun. Just as she was completing it, Dr. Fisher, Bishop of Exeter, was appointed as her tutor, and this made Hannah hesitate whether to publish it at all. She decided to do so, however, and prefaced it with an address to the Bishop, explaining to him that the work was undertaken before his appointment. The Bishop received the book

with cordiality, and a correspondence soon began between them, the Bishop addressing Hannah as a gentleman. But from internal evidence the book soon showed him that its author was a woman. On May 20th he wrote to tell Hannah that he had presented copies to the King and Queen and to the Prince and Princess of Wales; that the Queen had read the work and declared her approbation of it to him.

Charlotte Yonge states that the book was written at the Queen's command, but this is incorrect, for the Bishop tells Hannah in his second letter that the Queen had asked him who was the author of the book.

In a letter to Lady Waldegrave, Hannah wrote that she had been busy for many months in preparing a work which might "assist in forming the principles of her who, in all probability, will be our future Queen." It was not long after this, when dining at Gloucester Lodge, that Hannah had an interesting conversation with the King's brother, the Duke of Gloucester, on her *Hints to a Princess*. "After breakfast, when the company went to walk in the gardens, the Duke did me the honour of addressing me at large on the subject of my new book. The encouraging things he said carried with them an air of sincerity which was very gratifying. . . . His remarks on the education of the great were such as I could hardly have expected from the limited circles in which princes live; but what pleased me most was the earnestness he expressed that their early years should be kept as much as possible from every sort of knowledge which could communicate any taint of evil to the mind. He added: 'No boys were ever bred up in greater ignorance of evil than the King and myself. At fourteen years old, we retained all our native innocence."

In writing to Mr. Knox about the review of her book that had appeared in the *Christian Observer*, a paper that had been started by Wilberforce's circle, she says,

THE PRINCESS CHARLOTTE

From the portrait by George Dawe, R.A.

"The little nibblings of the *Christian Observer*, though well-intentioned, were not judiciously done for a friendly critic, who, I am of opinion, should always point out specific faults, and not excite general suspicions and make vague charges, especially when they intend to serve the interests of a work." She also says in this letter that she has not read the criticism in the *Edinburgh Review*, as she is not in duty bound to give six shillings to her flagellator.

The Princess, as Hannah's friends styled her new book in writing to her about it, was Hannah More's masterpiece, as far as her prose writings are concerned. In criticising it ourselves, we should say that there are many pages which might well have been omitted without lessening the value of the work. Sometimes, to borrow a metaphor from Apulius, by paring away or chipping off even what is pure gold, we may add more to the value of the gold we leave than is the value of that which we remove.

In the introductory chapter the authoress observes that the laws of human nature will not bend to human greatness, and that the first habit to be formed in every human being, and still more in the offspring of and heir to royalty, is that of patience, and even cheerfulness under postponed and restricted gratification.

The first lesson to be taught to the royal pupil is: "Where others cannot restrain us, there especially we should restrain ourselves." She then tells how Gustavus Adolphus, when a soldier found him at prayer in his tent, said, "Persons of my rank are answerable to God alone, and the dangers of such a position are only to be resisted by prayer and reading the scriptures." And she adds: "It can easily be proved, that man is a rational being only so far as he can thus command himself."

In the chapter on the acquisition of knowledge, the way in which Lady Jane Grey and Queen Elizabeth

were educated is alluded to, and Roger Ascham's account of Elizabeth's thorough knowledge of the best Greek authors is quoted. "Almost every man of rank was then a man of letters, and literature was valued accordingly. Had, therefore, deficiency of learning been added to inferiority of sex, we might not at this day have had the reign of Elizabeth to look back to as the period in which administrative energy seemed to attain the greatest possible perfection."

A princess must know the ancient authors, but a general knowledge of the ancient languages may be dispensed with. The Greek authors are more transfusible into English than into any other modern tongue. Latin, however, is indispensable. Reading the Roman historians in the original brings us into actual contact with the ancient world. By a proficiency in Latin "she will learn to be more accurate in her definitions as well as more critically exact and elegant in the use of her own language, and her ability to manage it with gracefulness and vigour will be considerably increased."

From the outset Hannah More fully realised that there was so much knowledge that was absolutely indispensable for a person in Princess Charlotte's position to attain, that the most careful and judicious selection would be necessary to avoid displacing a necessary subject of study by one that could be better spared. A princess who is properly prepared to occupy the British throne will not have much leisure for the fine arts, or for music. Proficiency in these could never be gained without stealing time from more important pursuits, and here a reference is made to Farinelli, "who thought his pension of £2000, from the King of Spain, a poor compensation for his being sometimes obliged to hear his Majesty play."

The importance of method is next urged, as not only aiding the memory, but also assisting the judgment, by showing the dependence of one thing upon another. Chronology is of the greatest importance and History

should be studied with a map, in order to keep up in the mind the indissoluble connection between history and geography. Physical geography is of importance, as it will teach the royal pupil the effects of situation and boundary, and the formation of nations and empires.

The third chapter is devoted to the importance of forming the mind. She should acquire an early habit of method and regularity in her studies, and should be particularly guarded against "that desultory manner of reading, too common at this day, and particularly among women." She should be accustomed to call forth the forces of her mind, and to keep them alert, well-disciplined and ready for service. She should possess a promptitude as well as soundness in deducing consequences and drawing conclusions. Promptitude of decision is of the greatest importance to a king or queen.

"The art of reigning is the profession of a prince, and it is a science that requires at least as much preparatory study as any other.

"'Dii laboribus omnia vendunt.'

"*Let her ever bear in mind that she is not to study to become learned, but that she may become wise.* [This sentence is printed in italics]. It is not so important to know everything as to know the value of everything. Books alone will never form the character. Mere reading is apt to make us pedantic. It is conversation which must develop what is obscure, raise what is low, correct what is defective, qualify what is exaggerated, and gently and almost insensibly raise the understanding, form the heart, and fix the taste.

"The memory should be stored with none but the the best things, that when, hereafter, the judgment is brought into exercise, it may find none but the best materials to act upon.

"The habit of comprehensiveness must not be overlooked. Her mind should be trained to embrace a wide

compass; it should be taught to take in a large whole, and then subdivide it into parts. . . . Petty details must never be allowed to fill the mind at the expense of neglecting greater objects.

"It is a great and necessary art to learn to extract the essential spirit of an author from the body of his work: to know how to seize the vital parts; to discern where his strength lies."

To economise time the Princess might be read to while dressing. Queen Mary read aloud to her maids of honour while they were dressing her.

"The bent of the pupil's mind should be watched during playtime; faults that are found to be predominant should be diminished by a counteracting force.

"There are few things more fatal to the mind than to depend for happiness on contingent recurrences of events, businesses, diversions."

Reading has its moral uses independently of the nature of the study itself. It is a grand cure for a restless temper and a vacant mind. "Could Louis XIV. have read, probably the Edict of Nantes had not been revoked." She then points out how, in his old age, from never having learned how to employ himself in reading or thinking, Louis XIV.'s life became a blank from which he could not be relieved by the sight of his palaces and gardens."

Then comes a chapter on the formation of character, the grand object to be accomplished. This is not a separate business, but a centre to which all the rays of instruction should be directed.

"A prince should on no consideration pluck a feather from the decorations of royalty, which by a long association of ideas have become intimately connected with its substance." In short, every wise inhabitant of the British Isles must feel that he who would despoil the crown of its jewels, would not be far from spoiling the wearer of his crown. We note that even in her day she speaks of our country as "an empire."

Perhaps the most out-of-date paragraphs of the book are those relating to the duties of a king as " the supreme head of the Church."

In a chapter on the importance of studying history, she observes : " It can never be too soon for a royal pupil to begin to collect materials for reflection and action. . . . The acquisition of her present tastes will form the elements of her subsequent character. In reading history a judicious selection of authors will be necessary. Sallust is recommended and such writers as, like this exquisite historian, unfold the internal springs of action, and dissect the hearts and minds of their personages. History is the glass by which the royal mind should be dressed. Reading and observation are the two grand sources of improvement. History is a storehouse of material for the art of government."

There are some forcible remarks on the laws of ancient Egypt and Persia. Bossuet has pronounced Egypt to be " the fountain of all political wisdom." The Egyptians had a law which assigned some employment to every individual of the State. It was a departure from her constitutional principles that led to Egypt's downfall. It was a neglect and contempt for those venerable laws which for sixteen centuries had constituted her glory and their happiness.

Persia had such an extraordinary respect for education that no sorrow was ever expressed for young persons who died uninstructed.

" The best human laws will not be exempt from the imperfections inseparable from all human things. Let us beware, however, of those innovators who, instead of carefully improving and vigorously executing those laws which are already established, adopt no remedies short of destruction, tolerate no improvements short of creation, who are carried away by a wild scheme of visionary perfection which, if it could anywhere be found to exist, would not be likely to be found in the projects of men who

disdain to avail themselves of ancient experience and progressive wisdom. . . . Those modern reformers who pretend to be in raptures with the Greek republics would do well to imitate the deliberation and the slowness, the doubt, with which the founder of Athenian legislation introduced his laws. Solon would not suffer a single law to be determined on till the first charm of novelty was past and the first heat of enthusiasm had cooled." To the innovator antiquity spells ignorance, custom is tyranny, and laws are chains.

She next touches on the long vexed question whether the stage can be made a school for morals; and notes how Athens, when her theatres were free to all, was universally sunk in the most degraded state of manners, though her tragedians were among the greatest the world has seen.

In the chapter devoted to Rome, the royal pupil is shown how the Roman Empire lost in solidity as it gained in expansion. How she trusted too much for the stability of her greatness to the deceitful splendour of remote acquisition, and the precarious support of distant colonial attachment; how her downfall was also attributable to the loss of reverence for the gods who alone could preserve that deep sense of the sanctity of oaths.

One of the faults found with this book by its critics has been her recommending Rollin as a modern author of ancient history rather than Gibbon. But she had her reasons for not recommending Gibbon. Thucydides, Polybius, Xenophon, Cæsar, all come in for a few terse remarks; Joinville and Philip de Comines are recommended; Davila and Sully, "whose works ought to be read by ministers to instruct them how to serve kings; and by kings to teach them how to choose ministers." As the pupil grows older, the writings of Cardinal de Retz are to be recommended, also the writings of Temple, the author of the Triple Alliance; the manner-painting Clarendon; Torcy; Burnet, "who saw a great deal, and

wished to have it thought that he saw everything." The letters of Lady Russell, daughter of Southampton, "should be read for their strong sense and useful information."

"A prince must study history to trace the dependence of one event upon another. He is interested not merely when a signal event arises, but by the whole skill of the game, and he is on this account anxious to possess many inferior circumstances, serving to unite one event with another, which to the ordinary reader appear insignificant and dull."

Plutarch in his *Lives* teaches two things excellently —antiquity and human nature. He would deserve admiration if only for that magazine of wisdom condensed in the sayings of so many great men which he has recorded. Suetonius should also be read (in selections). "Tyrants will always detest history, and of all historians they will detest Suetonius." Tacitus "is the historian of philosophers, the oracle of politicians." He is valuable for his deep and acute reflections. "Livy, with all his diffuseness, is the writer who assists in forming the taste. . . . He directs the judgment by passing over slight things in a slight manner, and dwelling only on the prominent parts of his subject, though he has been accused of some important omissions. He keeps the attention always alive, by exhibiting passions as well as actions and, what best indicates the hand of a master, we hang suspended on the event of his narrative as if it were a fiction, of which the catastrophe is in the power of the writer, rather than a real history, with whose termination we are already acquainted. He is admirable no less for his humanity than his patriotism, and he is one of the few historians who have marked the broad line of discrimination between true and false glory." A page is devoted to the author's reasons for so warmly recommending pagan authors, and then she adds, "Though philosophy has given some admirable rules for maintaining the out-

works of virtue, Christianity is the only religion which ever pretended to expel vice from the heart."

In the chapter on English history several pages are devoted to a criticism of Hume. "His finely painted characters of Alfred and Elizabeth should be engraved on the heart of every sovereign, but in his treatment of the House of Stewart 'he is a serpent under a bed of roses.' There is in his manner a sedateness which imposes; in his scepticism a sly gravity, which puts the reader more off his guard than the vehemence of censure, or the levity of wit; for we are always less disposed to suspect a man who is too wise to appear angry. . . . He makes others responsible for the worst things he asserts, and spreads the mischief without avowing the malignity . . . he ascribes such a slender superiority to one religious system above another, that the young reader who does not come to the perusal with his principles formed, will be in danger of thinking that the Reformation was really not worth contending for." She then shows how Hume confounds fanaticism with religion.

A chapter is devoted to the important eras of English history. The reign of Alfred is particularly recommended for the study of kings. "In Alfred, the most vigorous exertion of public justice was united with attachment to public liberty. It is to Alfred that we are indebted for the conception of that unparalleled idea, the origin of juries. It was Alfred who surmounted the misfortune of a neglected education so as to make himself a scholar, a philosopher, and the moral as well as the civil instructor of the people. Alfred came nearer than any other monarch has ever done to the ideal of a perfect king."

She next points out the striking similarity that existed between the early life of Alfred and the early life of Charles II. What a lesson had Alfred prepared for Charles! The different endings to these two are to be studied and compared. A chapter is devoted to Queen Elizabeth. She begins by remarking that France, though

a land that has always held women in high esteem, is the only country that has never been governed by a woman.

"The best queens have been most remarkable for employing great men — Zenobia, Elizabeth, Anne of Austria. The choice of sagacious ministers is an indication of a sagacious sovereign." We twentieth-century readers have only got to replace the word "sovereign" by "nation," and we shall bring the remark quite up to date.

"Elizabeth's acquiescence in the measures of her ministers was that of conviction, never that of implied confidence." Her steadiness of purpose and her undaunted resolution are carefully noted. Her frugality is then noticed, and an able dissertation follows on royal economy. Our moralist quotes Cicero: "Men are not aware what a rich treasury frugality is."

The mind of the royal pupil should be early fortified against the dangers of flattery. "The dangers of adulation are doubled when the female character is combined with the royal. Even the vigorous mind of the great Elizabeth was not proof against flattery."

It is by a close study of the weaknesses and passions of a sovereign that crafty and designing favourites are ever on the watch to establish their own dominion.

With regard to the friendships of a prince, Hannah More says, "The attachments formed without judgment, and pursued without moderation, are likely to be dissolved without reason.

"A prince should be accustomed to see and know things as they really are, and should be taught to dread that state of delusion in which the monarch is the only person ignorant of what is doing in his kingdom.

"To degrade his character, he need only be led into one vice, idleness, and be attacked by one weapon, flattery. There is hardly a fault a sovereign can commit to which flattery may not incline him." He should be taught, as Masillon taught his youthful prince, that the flattery of a courtier is little less

dangerous than the disloyalty of the rebel. Both would betray him.

Another chapter points out the necessity of religion to the well-being of a State. "Cromwell was unfortunately not the only ruler who held that the rules of morality could be dispensed with on great political occasions. But he who was not only a politician but a king has assured us that 'righteousness exalteth a nation.' It would indeed be strange if the great Author of all things had admitted such an anomaly into His moral government. He did not make one law for the individual and another for the community.

"One of the most acute of our political writers has stated that all government rests on opinion; on the right to power in their governors, or on the opinion of its being their own interest to obey. Now religion naturally confirms both these principles, and thereby strengthens the very foundations of the powers of government."

"Who," she asks, "is the man of peace and quietness? Who is the least inclined to 'meddle with them that are given to change'? Is it not the man of religious and domestic habits; whose very connections, pursuits, and hopes are so many pledges for his adherence to the cause of civil order, and to the support of the laws and institutions of his country?

"It was the able and profligate Machiavelli who said, 'Those princes and commonwealths who would keep their governments entire and uncorrupt are above all things to have a care of religion and its ceremonies, and preserve them in due veneration; for in the whole world there is not a greater sign of imminent ruin, than when God and His worship are despised.' Machiavelli and Bishop Butler, two men of totally opposite principles and characters, pointedly agreed on this topic (*Analogy*, p. i. chap. iii.).

"It was the great Chancellor de L'Hôpital who observed that religion had more influence upon the spirits

of mankind than all their passions put together; and that the cement by which it united them was infinitely stronger than all the other obligations of civil society. This was not the observation of a dreaming monk, but the sentiment derived from the experience of an illustrious statesman.

"Religion in a State affords security to the throne. Our wisest sovereigns, partly from this reason, have paid the deepest attention to the moral instruction of the lower classes of their subjects. The political value of religion can never be too firmly believed, or too carefully kept in view.

"Far be it from us to deny that this religious principle may not frequently oppose itself to apparent means of aggrandisement, both personal and national. Doubtless it will often condemn that to which human pride will aspire. Even when an object might in itself be fairly desirable, it will forbid the pursuit, except through lawful paths. But in the severest of such restrictions it only sacrifices what is shadowy to what is substantial, the evanescent triumphs of a day to the permanent comfort of successive generations."

Then comes a chapter showing how integrity is the true political wisdom. She does not hold that a politician is a man "who can do shameful things without being ashamed."[1] "What can there be, indeed, so different between the situation of two public men, who on the part of their several countries respectively are negotiating on questions of policy or commerce, and that of two private men who are treating on some business of ordinary life, which should render impolite, in the public concern, that honesty which, in the private, is so universally acknowledged to be the best policy?" Don Louis de Haro, the Spanish Minister, at the treaty of the Pyrenees, said to Mazarin, "That man always pursued one great error in politics; he would always deceive." The character of Lord Sunderland presents a striking instance of the

[1] Emerson.

political inefficacy of duplicity. "He ceased to be trusted in the degree in which he became to be known."

"The wisdom of this world is bounded by this world; the dimensions of which are so contracted, and its duration so short, in the eye of true philosophy, as to strip it of all real grandeur.

"There will always be too vast a disproportion between the appetites and enjoyments of the ambitious to admit of their being happy.

"Nothing can fill the desires of a great soul but what he is persuaded will last as long as he himself shall last. Ambition is a little passion."

A chapter is devoted to the true art of popularity. "A prince should pursue popularity, not as the ultimate end of life, but as an object which, by making life honourable, makes it useful. . . . A desire of popularity is still more honest in princes than in other men. When the means used to obtain it are strictly just, it is highly laudable. . . . The discontents of the people should not be stifled before they reach the royal ear; nor should their affection be represented as a fund which can never be drained."

"The fatal catastrophe of Charles I. was not a national act, but the act of a fanatical party. The fascinating manners of Charles II. so won every heart that it required all his vices to alienate them. William, satisfied with having saved the country, forgot it was important to please it. Her subjects only bore with Elizabeth's peremptory manners because they had a thorough conviction that the country was secure in her hands, and its happiness as dear to her as her own. These are the true foundations of popularity."

Another chapter points out the necessity to a prince of business habits. Bacon advises that despatch in business should be measured not by the time spent over it, but by the advancement of the business itself.

Julius Cæsar was a model in this respect. De Witt

observed that it was by doing one thing at a time that he was able to accomplish so much.

"Princes should never forget that where sincerity is expected, freedom must be allowed. . . . They should no more employ flattery than exact it. Flattery is one of the secret artifices of self-love; it looks generous, but it is really covetous."

"A prince should guard against sarcasm; every wound made by the royal hand is mortal to the feelings of those on whom it is inflicted: and every heart which is thus wounded is alienated. . . . The sayings of princes are often repeated, and they are not always repeated faithfully. . . . Sovereigns have been known to ruin themselves by indiscretion."

It is sometimes very difficult for princes to discover the real character of those who surround them. "But there is one principle of selection which will in general direct them well. Let them choose for their companions those who in their ordinary habits show their regard for morality and virtue. From such men as these, princes may more reasonably expect to hear the language of truth." If a prince is never opposed he is in danger of concluding himself to be always in the right.

"Discretion is a quality so important in the royal person that he should early be taught the most absolute control over his own mind." It was Livy who remarked that the perfection of behaviour is for a man to retain his own dignity without intruding on the liberty of another. He might have said it of a prince.

"The world is too generally entered upon as a scene of pleasure instead of trial; as a theatre of amusement, not of action. The high-born are taught to enjoy the world at an age at which they should be learning to know it; and to grasp the prize while they should be exercising themselves for the combat."

A chapter follows on the princes who have obtained the name of "Great," such as Charles V., Peter the Great, &c.

Of Peter the Great she says: "The qualities which this prince threw away, as beneath the attention of a great mind, were precisely such as a tinsel hero would pick up, on which to build the reputation of greatness. The shreds and parings of a Peter would make a Louis. But Peter himself presents a melancholy instance of how a prince 'may reform a people without reforming himself,' as Peter himself observed."

We now come to some of the most interesting chapters —those in which such books are discussed as are likely to be of special use to a sovereign.

She begins by alluding to the immense value of conversation as a means of drawing the powers of the understanding into exercise, and bringing into circulation the treasures which the memory has been amassing. In reading, the mind must not be burdened with a load of dry matter; that would only make it dull, nor must it be burdened with a mass of poetry, which a prince can have little occasion to use. It may often be well, however, to commit to memory occasional passages from the best authors in every department, one select passage here, one weighty sentence there, one striking precept, one detached reflection.

We read with more attention when we know that we shall be called upon to produce the substance of what we have read. In order to prevent desultory and unsettled habits, it is well to tie the mind down to one selected topic, and not to allow it to wander from the point under consideration. This practice steadily observed strengthens the faculties of thinking and reasoning, and consequently highly improves the powers of conversation. Next to history, the most useful books are those of biography, such as the lives of Burnet, and Isaac Walton. Of the latter, it is hard to say whether it is the more amusing or the more informing. Voyages and travels come next under consideration. These should be very carefully selected.

Among the works of imagination *Telemachus* is re-

commended, though our author fears that, by being used in schools for purposes of teaching the French language, it has lost favour with young people. Children love fiction ; and it is of this taste that Fénelon has availed himself. The *Cyropædia* of Xenophon is also recommended, for " genius and virtue are never antiquated."

As essay writers, Addison and Johnson are recommended. To properly appreciate Addison we must attend to the progress of English literature, and make a comparison between him and his predecessors. She does not, however, extend her praise to every passage that Addison has written, and the royal pupil should be guarded against a wholly promiscuous perusal. With Johnson it is otherwise, with him every page is invariably delicate. It is the rare praise of this author that all his voluminous works may safely be put into the hands of the royal pupil independently of his or her sex. Even Johnson's Dictionary is perfectly harmless.

Johnson describes characters ; Addison presents you with actual men and women. " Whereas with the members of the *Spectator's* club we are acquainted, Johnson's personages are elaborately carved figures that fill niches of the saloon." Johnson's have more drapery, Addison's more countenance.

Several pages are devoted to the excellences of the writings of Addison and Johnson, and it is pointed out that Addison, by his criticisms of *Paradise Lost*, was the means of teaching his countrymen to appreciate the beauties of Milton.

In the chapter on books of amusement, the first book to be mentioned is *Don Quixote*, of which she says : " There are few books equally capable which possess the power of delighting the fancy without conveying any dangerous lesson to the heart. Although written so long ago, that right good sense which is of all ages and countries pervades this work more almost than its exquisite wit and humour ; those masterly portraits of

character; those sound maxims of conduct; those lively touches of nature, leave it without a parallel. Wit, it has been said, is gay, humour is grave. It is a striking illustration of this opinion that the most serious and solemn nation in the world should have produced the work of the most genuine humour. Two followers of Cervantes were not only less talented, but are still further below their master in mental and moral delicacy—Le Sage and Fielding."

Several pages are now devoted to Shakespeare, many of whose tragedies and historical pieces are to be read by the royal pupil. "Shakespeare has seized every turn and flexure of the ever-varying mind of man in all its fluctuating forms; touched it in all its changeful shades, and marked it in all its nicer gradations, as well as all its most abrupt varieties." But here she adds that there is so much that is vulgar, so much that is absurd, so much that is impure; so much indecent levity, false wit, and gross description, that he should only be read in parcels, and with the nicest selection; there are some of his pieces that should not be read at all by a royal pupil.

English translations of the great Greek tragedians are next recommended, and most of the tragedies of Racine, whose *Athalie* is a *chef-d'œuvre* of the dramatic art, a proof of what exquisite poetic beauties the Bible histories are susceptible.

A chapter now follows on books of instruction. The writings of Lord Bacon are here strongly recommended, and several pages are devoted to his genius. Nothing seems to have been too great or too small for the universal mind of Bacon; nothing too high for his strong and soaring wing; nothing too vast for his extensive grasp; nothing too deep for his profound spirit of investigation; nothing too minute for his microscopic discernment. Unhappily this great genius has shown us that he could stoop as well as soar.

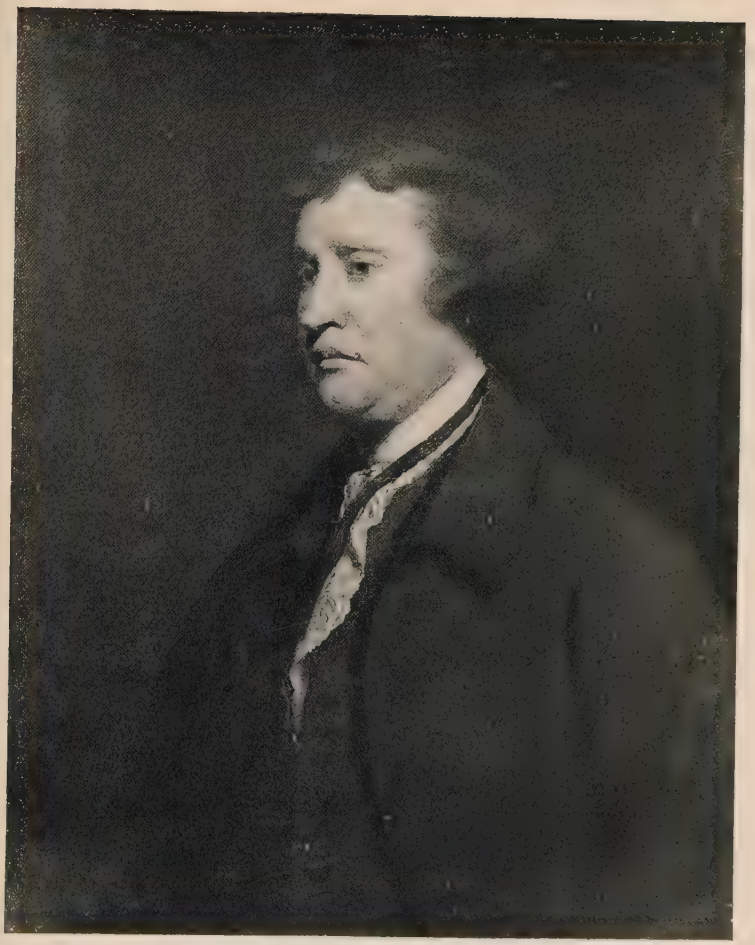
Locke is next mentioned, and his *Essay on the Human Understanding*, which, as Lord Shaftesbury remarked, may qualify a man as well for business and the world as for the sciences and the university.

"There are few books with which a royal personage ought to be more thoroughly acquainted than with the famous work of Grotius on the *Rights of War and Peace*. In this work the great principles of justice are applied to the highest political purposes, and the soundest reason is employed in the cause of the purest humanity. In the course of this work Grotius inquires with a very vigorous penetration into the origin of the rights of war, its different kinds, and the extent of the power of the sovereign."

All who are acquainted with this magnificent work from the pen of Grotius will readily agree that Hannah More could hardly have chosen a work more suited to the perusal and study of England's future monarch. Unfortunately for the rising generation, both Grotius and Hannah More are considered quite out of date in the twentieth century, if indeed their names have not escaped entire oblivion. The best subscription library in Great Britain to-day does not possess a complete edition of Hannah More's writings, and the latest edition of Grotius which it can offer to subscribers was published in 1715. This neglect of Grotius is the more astounding when we remember that the questions he treats with such unrivalled wisdom are the very questions which occupy every thinking mind in our own day. If the pages of any human author deserve the epithet of "luminous," they are those of Grotius.

In recommending Burke's *Reflections on the French Revolution* to the royal pupil Hannah More devotes a couple of pages to the character and genius of this great man, who for so many years of his life had been her personal friend. She does not hesitate to point out his inconsistencies, his occasional surrender to prejudice,

his impetuosity. But she also shows how, at the time of France's upheaval, the warning voice which first sounded the alarm in Britain's ears, and kindled a spirit to repel the threatened danger, was that of Edmund Burke.



EDMUND BURKE

From the portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds, P.R.A.

CHAPTER XXVII

"CŒLEBS IN SEARCH OF A WIFE"

The young Princess for whom Hannah More had written her masterpiece grew up to be England's idolised Princess Charlotte. A few months before her marriage she read the book through with her tutor, and was particularly pleased with the observations on history. In a preface to the fifth edition Hannah alludes to the Princess's early death, and says: "It was a sorrow not the less felt by every one because it was shared by all; it was as much an individual as a universal sorrow. Every Briton appeared to feel it as acutely as if he alone felt it. It seemed, as in the case of Egypt, that there was not an house where there was not one dead." And she adds: "But if it was deeply afflicting to see a whole nation in tears, it was, in a higher sense, deeply instructive to see a whole nation on their knees." At the death of King Edward VII. it was said that there had never been such deep national mourning since the death of the Princess Charlotte. Hannah More's biographer tells us that it was a fact accredited by good authority that the *Hints* of Hannah More was one of the last books in the hand of the young Princess.

On returning from one of her schools in the spring of the year 1806, Hannah More caught a severe chill, which resulted in a long and tedious illness. For some months her life was despaired of, and during that time of suspense the poor among whom she had worked so long and so lovingly seemed to lose all thought of themselves in their concern for their benefactress. No class of society, in the words of her biographer, had

escaped her searching philanthropy, and all seemed to have an equal interest in the prolongation of her existence. The letters of sympathy which poured in upon the sisters amounted to some hundreds. On July 30, 1808, Hannah wrote to Wilberforce that she hardly slept more than one night a week, and that, after nearly two years' confinement, she was only just beginning to go to church, and had only visited her schools twice.

In 1809 death carried off her old friend the Bishop of London (Dr. Porteus). It had been his express will that his executors should destroy all his papers, so none of Hannah More's long letters to him have been preserved. He bequeathed her a legacy of a hundred pounds, and this she spent in laying out her plantation of trees at Barley Wood, and placing there an urn with an inscription to his memory.

In December 1809, Hannah More published a new work, entitled *Cœlebs in Search of a Wife.* The book excited much attention, and within a few days of its first appearance the publisher requested her to prepare a second edition, but before this could be put through the press the book was out of print (before it had been published a fortnight), and booksellers all over the country were clamorous for copies. Before it had been out eleven months, it had passed through twelve editions. In America it sold equally well; four editions succeeded each other with an unexampled rapidity, even for that country. Thirty editions of a thousand copies each were printed in the United States during Hannah More's lifetime.

In a letter to Mrs. Kennicott, in 1810, Hannah wrote: "Cadell and Davis have just sent me their account. The cost of printing, paper, &c., is exorbitantly increased, and I had near £5000 to pay for expenses, besides all the booksellers' profits; partly in consequence of my having given more for the money than any book that has lately appeared—as you know, books do not sell in proportion

to their intrinsic value, but to their size. . . . Notwithstanding these disadvantages, you will be glad to hear that I cleared within the year £2000 to be paid by instalments, £500 a quarter. That Walter Scott's two-guinea poem should produce £2000 is not strange; but that a trumpery twelve-shilling one (*Cælebs*) should produce the same sum so soon, was what I had no reason to expect. The copyright is still in my hands."

The book was, like all her previous works, published anonymously, and so well did she keep her secret this time that, long after its publication, she continued to receive letters from her intimate friends begging her to read it, and giving her a description of its contents and general tendency.

The book met with a great deal of adverse criticism. She received a long letter from the Pope's vicar-general when he had discovered that she was its author. "You, madam," he wrote, "now, and on other occasions, have assumed the high office of a *censor morum*, and a censor also of religious practices and religious belief. To pronounce on these subjects without danger of error, a very accurate knowledge should have been previously acquired. This knowledge you have not always even when your censure is peremptory. Page 123, you say, 'Why, this is retaining all the worst part of popery! Here is the abstinence without the devotion; the outward observance without the interior humiliation; the suspending of sin, not only without any design of forsaking it, but with a fixed resolution of returning to it, and of increasing the gust by the forbearance.' As nothing more severe was ever said against the religion of Catholics; so nothing was ever uttered by their worst enemies, more groundless, more false, more calumnious. The whole passage contains not a particle of truth. I am a minister of that religion, and my name may not be quite strange to you. Whence have you drawn your notions of our tenets? For of them you speak, and not of

practice, which too often, even in the purity of Protestantism, I presume, cannot be defended. In all your reading have you never taken up one of our moral writers? . . . Can you persuade yourself that your favourites Fénelon and Pascal held those detestable principles, which you unblushingly impute to their religious belief? Nothing is more surprising than that you Protestants should be so utterly ignorant as you really are, or seem to be, of our tenets; when we all, whatever be our country, think alike, and our catechisms and books of instruction lie open before the world." He then complains how the Bishop of Durham had accused them of suppressing the second commandment.

Hannah More, about whom there was neither narrow-mindedness nor bigotry, wrote a reply which gave full satisfaction to the vicar-general. She had not meant, she assured him, to attack the tenets of the Catholics, but only the practices, and that she would so alter the passage in her next edition as to make that plain. As a proof of her cherishing no ill-feeling towards persons of his religion, she reminded him of her efforts on behalf of the emigrant French clergy, and how her sister's home at Bath had been thrown open to them as long as they were in distress, and that during the whole time that her home was at their disposal for many winters, no word of altercation between her and them had ever arisen, even though they dined at the same table.

Hannah mentions in a letter written in 1809 that Mr. Cumberland, in his review of *Cœlebs*, had talked of "suckling babes of grace" and "making hell broth," and advises the bishop against a book which is intended to overturn the Church, that the deepest mischiefs lurk in every page of *Cœlebs*, and as the book is in many hands he feels it his duty to say "*Caveat emptor*." Cumberland was then nearly eighty years of age.

Cœlebs, the hero of Hannah's new book, is a young man of twenty-four, who has been carefully brought up

by an excellent mother, and who goes on a round of visits to various old friends of his father's, hoping to come across by so doing a suitable partner for life. It is his dream that the ideal wife should resemble as closely as possible the Eve of *Paradise Lost*. In accordance with the dying wish of his parents, he is resolved to come to no final decision on this important matter till he has paid a visit to their old friend Mr. Stanley. The main part of the book is taken up with descriptions of various families and conversations between Cœlebs and the people he meets. Cœlebs himself writes the book, and he also writes a preface explaining how the book came into existence: it arose from his jotting down notes while on a little excursion, or, as we should say, a round of visits, and he adds that the field is a narrow one, the actors being principally such as move in the quiet and regular course of domestic life. He explains that he does not attempt to delineate great passions and great trials growing out of them, and that "love itself appears in these pages, not as an ungovernable impulse, but as a sentiment arising out of qualities calculated to inspire attachment in persons under the dominion of reason and religion, brought together by the ordinary course of occurrences in a private family party." He is quite prepared, he says, that the novel reader will find the book dull; while the religious will probably throw it aside as frivolous.

Although there are many masculine characters in the book, it is clear that in writing it Hannah More's interest was mainly in her women. Had she divided her attention more equally between the two sexes, her work would have drawn upon itself less of the ridicule that even Christian writers thought fit to cast upon it. The men in *Cœlebs* are for the most part mere puppets, and mouthpieces for sermons. Nowhere did the book meet with more cutting criticism on this account than in the pages of the *Christian Observer*,

a religious periodical started and run by her own friends. It was thought that their review was written without their having the slightest suspicion that Hannah More was the author. The reviewer treated the author of *Cœlebs* as a man, and said many things which he certainly should have refrained from saying if he was aware that he was attacking not only a woman but an esteemed personal friend. It was a most unfortunate mistake that this critic's sarcasm was chiefly directed against the character of Cœlebs—a very foolish thing, for any one who read the book carefully could see that Cœlebs is not given any character. Whatever his perfections or failings might have been, they are shrouded in silence; in short, as we have said, Hannah had been so engrossed with her women characters, and especially with that of her heroine, Lucilla, that she had forgotten to give Cœlebs, the hero, any character at all. A great granddaughter of the editor of the *Christian Observer*,[1] when touching on this subject a few years ago, said that "the real sting of the article lay in the fact that the reviewer felt, what every one who reads the book is bound to feel, an unmitigated detestation and contempt for the character of the hero," and that he wound up his remarks on Cœlebs by saying, "To speak honestly, after many efforts and much self-reproach, we still find it difficult to be quite reconciled to this youth. Lucilla perhaps will improve him."

Hannah More was cut to the heart by this review, and in a letter to the editor, dated March 1, 1809, she wrote: "My own impression after reading the review you were so good as to send me is, that if I were a stranger, and had bespoke a copy of Cœlebs, I should instantly send to forbid it, so very disagreeable an impression would this criticism on the whole leave on my mind. Faults enough there are in Cœlebs, and I expected, and should thankfully have received, some grave reproof.

[1] See *Life of Zachary Macaulay*, by Viscountess Knutsford.

Praise is bestowed perhaps too liberally on some parts, but all the praise lumped at the end can do but little good after a work has been made ridiculous. That sort of sneer I expect from a Scotch but not from a Christian critic, and to close with a solemn prayer for the success of a work which has been described in many parts as ridiculous is not quite consistent. . . . I leave you to judge if every young lady, after this disgusting picture of the hero, will not be more than ever afraid of a 'religious young man.' How far it was prudent for the interests of piety to stamp this character with such an odious impression, others must judge, as well as how far it was feeling to hold me up to the religious world as writing indecently. The critic well knew the writer was a woman. I am sorry I did not put my name to the work to take away all subterfuge." And in a postscript she adds, "The epithet of 'steady' sneeringly applied to Cœlebs belongs to a good coachman or butler, but is meant to disgust in a young man of fashion." In this review the care with which Cœlebs endeavours to make sure that he is choosing the right woman to be his wife is alluded to as "a low suspiciousness about him that is particularly inamiable." We can only say that if young men of all ages were to employ a little more of that suspiciousness before leaping into wedlock, there would be far less work for the divorce courts.

Before Cœlebs set out on his round of visits, several county families of his own neighbourhood were suggested to him as containing marriageable daughters, but after taking a look at them he had decided that there was nothing there for him. Among her last words to her son, his mother had bid him remember, in looking for a wife, that, though it was absurd to expect perfection in any woman, it was not unreasonable to expect consistency, and that in character, as in architecture, proportion was beauty. His father, too, has cautioned him as to the choice of a wife, telling him that

the whole contour of his future will be determined by the "turn of mind of the woman you marry." His father added: "A man of sense, who loves home, requires a wife who can and will be at half the expense of mind necessary for keeping up the cheerful, animated, elegant intercourse which forms so great a part of the bond of union between intellectual and well-bred persons. . . . You will want a companion, an artist you may hire. . . . The ornaments which decorate do not support the edifice."

Of the young ladies of his own neighbourhood some were praised to Cœlebs as likely to make excellent wives "because, on a slender income, their appearance was as elegant as that of women of ten times their expectations." But this did not captivate the cautious Cœlebs, who at once inferred that "this personal figure was made by the sacrifice of their whole time to those decorations which procured them credit. He thought, of the girl who with one thousand pounds rivalled in dress the girl with ten thousand, that it was clear she must devote all her money to this end and have nothing to spare for charity.

These country young ladies, it was urged, had never been spoiled by the gaieties of London; but Cœlebs noticed the avidity with which they grasped at every shred of gaiety that came in their way in the country, and inferred therefrom that they would be still more ardent in their pursuit of London pleasures if the chance ever came in their way.

One of the things that astonished Cœlebs on his arrival in London (he had taken his degree at the University of Edinburgh), was the fact that those of his father's friends who, when on a visit to his father, had gone regularly to the country church on Sunday, never dreamed of going near a place of worship in town. "Religion, they told him, by way of apology," was entirely a thing of example, it was of great political im-

portance; society was held together by the restraints it imposed upon the lower orders, "but in London, where there were so many churches no one knew whether you went or not, and where no scandal was given no harm was done. Religion, with these gentlemen, was a kind of geographical distinction. Cœlebs, on the other hand, had been brought up to consider the Church an institution founded on the condition of human nature, a covenant of mercy for repairing the evils which sin has produced. To him Christianity was an individual as well as a general concern. He had been taught that every man was individually responsible, and that he could not take refuge in the piety of those around him.

His first visit was to a widower with two pretty daughters, and he says, "I placed myself between them at dinner, for the purpose of prying a little into their minds." He noticed with regard to the repast, that many of the dishes were out of season, ill-chosen, and ill-dressed. This reminded him of his having read somewhere that nothing tended to make ladies so useless and inefficient in household matters as the study of the dead languages, so he jumped to the conclusion that his two pretty hostesses must be Latin and Greek scholars. "Finding that my appetite was baulked, I took comfort in the certainty that my understanding would be well regaled." He then proceeded to ask the eldest girl if she did not think Virgil the finest poet in the world, and her answer being a modest blush, he repeated the question. "At this she stared, and said she had never heard of the person I mentioned, but that she had read *Tears of Sensibility* and *Rosa Matilda* and *Sympathy of Souls* and *Too Civil by Half*, and *The Sorrows of Werther*, &c."

"'Yes, sir,' joined in the other sister, who did not rise to so high a pitch of literature, 'and we have read, *Perfidy Punished*, and *Jemmy and Jenny Jessamy*, and *The Fortunate Footman*, and *The Illustrious Housemaid*.'"

At this Cœlebs blushed and stared in his turn. This chapter ends with the remark that though these young ladies had been taught much, they had learnt little, and that, with all their accomplishments, mind had been left nearly as much out of the question in making an ordinary artist as in making a good cook.

When Cœlebs dines with his father's friend Sir John Belfield, in Cavendish Square, the dinner is excellent, but one of the visitors, the youngest man present, talks so much about the food as to put a stop to all other conversation through the first half of the dinner, and the remainder of the time is spoiled by an inroad of the children from the nursery, all rushing and struggling who should be first. "The sprightly creatures ran round the table to choose where they would sit, and for some time monopolised all attention. At last one child upset a glass of red wine over the white dress of one of the ladies, to the great confusion of the whole party." At length there was a calm, but "you cannot beat up again an interest which has been so often cooled," and poor Cœlebs got no conversation that evening, though several of the guests were persons with whom he would have delighted to exchange a few ideas, and had been invited especially to meet him.

Cœlebs now visits Mr. and Mrs. Ranby, in their villa at Hampstead. These were esteemed pious persons, but, having risen to great affluence by a sudden turn of fortune in a commercial engagement, they had little self-sufficiency and were inclined to "ascribe an undue importance to wealth." Their religion consisted "almost exclusively in a disproportionate zeal for a very few doctrines." "Of Mrs. Ranby," says Cœlebs, "I saw that she took the lead in debate, and that Mr. Ranby submitted as a subaltern, but whether his meekness was the effect of piety or fear I cannot determine." The three daughters, "not unpleasing young women," sat jogging and whispering to one another, and took no part in the general

conversation, but got away as soon as they could. After they were withdrawn, "There, sir," said the mother, "are three girls who will make excellent wives. They never were at a ball or a play in their lives, and yet, though I say it, who should not say it, they are as highly accomplished as any at St. James's." This mother taught her daughters no religious principles—she believed "it must come from above." When Cœlebs afterwards conversed with the girls he found that all they said was "vapid and frivolous." They laid great stress on small things. They seemed to have no shades in their understanding, but used the strongest terms for the commonest occasions. They were "too open to have anything to conceal, and too uninformed to have anything to produce." As for their mother's religion, she talked as if activity were useless, and exertion unnecessary, and as if, like inanimate matter, we had nothing to do but to sit still and be shone upon. "Her zeal was fiery, because her temper was so, and her charity cold, because it was an expensive propensity to keep warm." "She seems to consider Christianity as a sort of Freemasonry, and thinks it superfluous to speak on serious subjects to any but the initiated. . . . She holds very cheap the gradual growth in piety, which is, in reality, no less the effect of divine grace than those instantaneous conversions which she believes to be so common." In the opinion of Cœlebs, instantaneous conversion was not God's established or common mode of operation, and it seemed to him vain and rash, nay, presumptuous, to wait for these miraculous interferences.

Cœlebs was curious to learn how Mrs. Ranby's daughters occupied their time, and he was informed that they spent it "at the piano, when weary of the harp, copying some indifferent drawings, gilding a set of flower-pots, and netting their gloves and veils."

On the whole we find that his description of the

London families whom he visits is for the most part confined to the mothers.

"In the evening Mrs. Ranby was lamenting, in general and rather customary terms, her own exceeding sinfulness.

"'You accuse yourself rather too heavily, my dear,' said Mr. Ranby. 'You have sins to be sure——'

"'And pray, what sins have I, Mr. Ranby?' said she, turning to him with so much quickness that the poor man started.

"'Nay,' said he meekly, 'I did not mean to offend you; so far from it that, hearing you condemn yourself so grievously, I intended to comfort you, and to say that, except a few faults——'

"'And pray what faults?' interrupted she, continuing to speak, however, lest he should catch an interval in which to tell them. 'I defy you, Mr. Ranby, to produce one.'

"'My dear,' replied he, 'as you charged yourself with all, I thought it would be letting you off cheaply by naming only two or three, such as——'

"Here Cœlebs, fearing matters might go too far between this amiable couple, tried to soften things a little for the lady, by saying that he thought Ranby meant that she partook of the general corruption——

"His speech was interrupted here by Mr. Ranby, who exclaimed that he did not mean to infer that his wife was worse than other women.

"'Worse, Mr. Ranby, worse?' cried she, and then Ranby, for the first time in his life, not minding her, went on:

"'As she is always insisting that the whole species is corrupt, she cannot help allowing that she herself has not quite escaped the infection. Now, to be a sinner in the gross, and a saint in the detail; that is, to have sins, and no faults, is a thing I do not quite comprehend.' And he left the room, whereupon Mrs. Ranby apologised

for him as a well-meaning man, who acted up to the little light he had, but was unacquainted with religious feeling, and knew little of the nature of conversion.

In his criticism of the book in the *Edinburgh Review*, Sydney Smith quoted the whole of the above as a bit of extremely good character-painting.

Among the other families to whom Cœlebs was introduced he found a lady who, with a little money of her own and some pretty daughters, was playing a daring game. By living in a style much beyond her income, and by dropping all her friends of the class to which she naturally belonged, she had elbowed her way into a class above her own, and was trying to find husbands in it for her daughters. In discussing this lady Sir John Belfield is made to say :

" Among the various objects of ambition, there are few in life which bring less accession to its comfort, than an unceasing struggle to rise to an elevation in society very much above the level of our own condition, without being aided by any stronger ascending power than mere vanity. Great talents, of whatever kind, have a natural tendency to rise and to lift the possessor. The flame in mounting does but obey its impulse. But when there is no energy more powerful than the passion to be great, destitute of the gifts which constitute greatness, the painful efforts are like water, forced above its level by mechanical powers. It requires the constant exertion of art to keep up what art first set a-going. Poor Mrs. Fentham's head is perpetually at work to maintain the elevation she has reached. And how little, after all, is she considered by those upon whose caresses her happiness depends ! She has lost the esteem of her original circle, where she might have been respected, without gaining that of her high associates, who, though they receive her, still refuse her claims of equality. She is not considered of their establishment ; it is toleration at best."

Another lady Cœlebs meets is so religious that she

will not touch a card during Lent, but plays off the whole of the game of the preceding night to her Sunday visitor. When asked to give to a charity this lady replies that she has had so many calls lately, and that "that abominable property tax makes me quite a beggar." It was in criticising this lady that Cœlebs made the remark which occasioned the correspondence between the Pope's vicar-general and Hannah More, to which we have alluded elsewhere.

"How many ways there are of being unhappy!" exclaimed Sir John, and then he tells Cœlebs about poor Mr. Stanhope, and his unfortunate marriage. Mrs. Stanhope has ruined him; he hardly ever sees his fine library, as it is the object of his wife's supreme aversion; he wastes his days in listless idleness and his fine mind is growing mean and disingenuous. The gentleness of his temper leads him not only to sacrifice his peace, but to infringe on his veracity, in order to keep his wife quiet. "I believe," adds Sir John, "she would be jealous of a fine day if her husband praised it."

At length, without having lost his heart in any of the London houses in which he has been a guest, Cœlebs arrives at the pretty country home of his father's old friend Mr. Stanley. Here he at once falls in love with the eldest daughter, Lucilla, who at eighteen is as near Hannah More's ideal of a perfect woman as it is possible for a girl of that age to be. Sir John and Lady Belfield also join Mr. Stanley's party, and the conversations on religious and moral topics which they indulge in with Mr. and Mrs. Stanley, Lucilla, Cœlebs, and the neighbouring clergyman fill half the book. A great deal of the conversation is on happy and unhappy marriages; other families living near are also introduced; and it is remarkable with what avidity the faults and virtues of all the country visitors are discussed in the family the moment they have taken their departure. There is a long discussion on the standard of right, and another on the

value of learning to a Christian, and especially to a clergyman. One of the party remarks that the value of learning depends solely on the purposes to which it is devoted.

Hannah More is evidently not one of those who like ladies to occupy themselves with needlework while they are being read to, for she makes one of the gentlemen say: "Once, I remember, when I was with much agitation hurrying through the *Gazette* of the Battle of Trafalgar, while I pronounced, almost agonised, the last words of Nelson, I heard one lady whisper to another, that she had broke her needle."

After a young lady caller related all she had been studying in London, Sir John remarks sarcastically: "It is only young ladies, whose vast abilities, whose mighty grasp of mind can take in everything. Among men, learned men, talents are commonly directed into some one channel, and fortunate is he who in that attains to excellence. The linguist is rarely a painter, nor is the mathematician often a poet. Even in one profession there are subdivisions. . . . But Woman, ambitious, aspiring, universal, triumphant, glorious woman, even at the age of a schoolboy, encounters the whole range of arts, attacks the whole circle of sciences."

In speaking of the time devoted to music by the young ladies of that day Mr. Stanley observes that he looks upon the predominance of music in female education as the source of more mischief than is suspected, not from any evil in the thing itself, but from its being such a gulf of time. "The monstrous proportion, or rather disproportion of life it swallows up, even in many religious families! All these hours the mind lies fallow; the morning, the prime, the profitable, the active hours, when the mind is vigorous, the spirits light, the intellect awake and fresh, the whole being wound up by the refreshment of sleep, and animated by the return of light. . . ."

In the twentieth century it is not music that takes up our mornings. The hours our great-grandmothers gave to music we give to hockey, to golf, and to tennis.

In one of the many conversations on marriage, Mr. Stanley observes: "Nothing so soon and so certainly wears out the happiness of married persons as that too common bad effect of familiarity, the sinking down into dulness and insipidity, neglecting to keep alive the flame by the delicacy which first kindled it. . . . Mutual affection decays of itself, even where there is no great moral ineptitude, without mutual endeavours not merely to improve but to amuse. This is one of the arts of home enjoyment."

"It is for the sober period when life has lost its freshness, the passions their intenseness, and the spirits their hilarity, that we should be preparing. Our wisdom would be to anticipate the wants of middle life, to lay in a store of notions, ideas, principles, and habits, which may preserve, or transfer to the mind, that affection which was at first partly attracted by the person. But to add the vacant mind to the form which has ceased to please, to provide no subsidiary aid to the beauty while it lasts, and especially no substitute when it has departed, is to render life comfortless and marriage dreary."

Hannah More was evidently of the opinion that the girls of her day should devote less of their time to music and more to solid reading, but she failed to consider that the singing and playing and other showy accomplishments, which twentieth-century girls designate as "tricks," are all most helpful in bringing their possessor conspicuously under the notice of the eligible young men among whom she must look for a husband. The girl who has chosen the solid reading and the mental accomplishments is now, as she was then, the one who is least likely to attract at the critical moment, and there is every possibility that after all her mental superiority she will find herself the old maid of the family, when her

more flashy sisters are all married off, and have become wives and mothers.

One of the most amusing chapters in the book is that in which the " horsey " woman is discussed and censured.

"'The cap, the whip, the masculine attire,'

the loud voice, the intrepid look, the independent air, the whole deportment, indicated a disposition rather to confer protection than to accept it." Such was Miss Sparks, the sporting lady of more than forty, who is introduced as a dark contrast to the delicate and feminine Lucilla of eighteen.

When at last Cœlebs and Lucilla become happily engaged, Mr. Stanley takes Cœlebs aside and gives him a packet of his father's letters to read. In perusing these, Cœlebs makes the discovery that his father and Mr. Stanley, who had been friends before their respective marriages, had designated Lucilla and himself for each other from their birth, and had agreed while both were still in their infancy to train each for the other, without revealing to them that they were so doing. It had been thought best that the two young people should remain apart and unknown to one another until they had both reached a marriageable age, and that they should then be brought together and left entirely to themselves, to be mutually drawn together or repelled as the case might be. In short, the parents of these two young people would doubtless, had they lived a hundred years later, been ardent approvers of the aims of the Eugenic Society and admiring followers of Galton.

In his review of the book, Sydney Smith notes that the characters converse almost as much on religious subjects as on ordinary occurrences, and he observes that if this were done in real life men would learn to converse on religious topics with as much familiarity and want of respect as they would upon matters relating to this world. He says that the book is "an apologetical

explanation of certain religious opinions, those of the Evangelical faction in the English Church." Speaking of Hannah More, he adds: "There occur every now and then, in her productions, very original and very profound observations. Her advice is often characterised by the most amiable good sense, and conveyed in the most brilliant and inviting style." It was the opinion of this critic that if, instead of adhering to the Evangelical party and their strict and sometimes rather narrow views, Hannah More had only watched over those great points of religion, in which the hearts of every sect of Christians are interested, she would have been one of the most useful and valuable writers of her day.

Sydney Smith would have found it hard, nevertheless, to mention a contemporary writer who could claim superiority to Hannah More in usefulness to his or her generation. The book was published in what Sydney Smith called "a canting age." Yet it would be very difficult to find a word of cant in *Cœlebs*. As for Sydney Smith himself, his religious views were so unfettered and so untrammelled by narrowness that his own biographers have been at a loss how to classify them, and one has suggested that "they approached nearer to what is called Deism than to any other ism."

"Distrust of what is known as Evangelicalism, partly of its doctrines and chiefly of its narrowness," wrote Charlotte Yonge, "and what in Germany is called 'pietism,' caused the darts to be directed against this book, and they are barbed with the irony of which the Canon of St. Paul's was master. To those more seriously disposed persons who barely tolerated fiction of any sort, *Cœlebs*, with its really able sketches of character and epigrammatic terms, was genuinely entertaining and delightful."

Cœlebs is perhaps the most religious novel that ever was penned, at least by an able writer. Almost all the irreligious characters in it are converted before the close

except poor Mr. F——, the country squire, who remained obdurate to the last, always with his "invincible good nature and the same pitiable insensibility to his own state." A Methodist author would have killed him by lightning or a fall from his horse, but Hannah More let him live on.

Our authoress was in her sixty-fifth year when she published it, and it was the last of her secular works. It has been said that the portrayal of women characters is the touchstone of novelists, and if that be true *Cœlebs* will live.

CHAPTER XXVIII

MACAULAY

We should not be going too far if we were to say that *Cœlebs in Search of a Wife* is a study in religious eugenics. We have now to show how Hannah More upheld in practice as well as in writing this science, which until the day of Galton was without a name.

After young Zachary Macaulay had been introduced to Hannah More by their mutual friends Mr. Thornton and Mr. Wilberforce, he met at her sister's house in Bath a young lady to whom the sisters were greatly attached, and whom they treated as a sixth and younger sister. It was a case of love at first sight with both parties, but Macaulay was about to sail for the African coast, where he was to stay three years, and Miss Selina Mills was advised by her friend Miss Patty More that she had better keep out of the way when the young gentleman was saying good-bye. It has even been stated that Patty exacted a promise from her young friend that she would never marry, and never separate herself from the More family. We are told that Zachary, feeling how uncertain were his prospects, had determined not to speak to Miss Mills till his return from Africa in three years' time, and that he would in all probability have remained firm in his resolution but for the strange behaviour of the Misses More. Although they knew the state of things, these ladies are said to have deluged him with invitations to visit them at Bath once more before he sailed for Africa. Even Hannah herself, to whom the young man had confided the secret of his feelings towards Miss Mills, wrote to him on January 14, 1796, warmly inviting him

to come. The fact of the matter seems to be that Patty's great attachment to Selina Mills made it very hard for her to contemplate the possibility of her young friend's marriage and ultimate separation from her, and that Hannah, seeing how matters stood, while screening Patty, was determined to set things right. With all due respect to Zachary Macaulay's great-granddaughter, she does not seem to have got the right pig by the ear in respect to this little romance, for she makes it look as if Hannah was among those who put obstacles in the way of the match.[1] Now Hannah's whole life proves, if it proves anything at all, that she was from first to last as open as the day, and quite incapable of anything that could approach duplicity, which she had always regarded as a deadly vice. We are safer in trusting the testimony of a life, than in judging by a few words from a letter, to lead us to the truth in a case like this. It may have been Hannah's wish to hide her sister Patty's fault that led her to appear to share in it, for hers was indeed that charity which hideth a multitude of sins, and even those who accuse her own that "she soon began to recover some sense of what was due to Macaulay," and that she endeavoured to mitigate to a certain extent the situation in which the poor fellow found himself. At their pressing invitation Zachary Macaulay went to Bath and dined with the Misses More. In a letter to a friend just afterwards he said that he saw from Miss Mills's looks that he was not the only person whose mind was affected, but "so fearful was I of transgressing the limits I had virtually promised Miss Hannah More to observe that I did not even dare to ask for Selina or to mention her name on coming away. Little did I suppose that the short interval between my quitting the parlour and stepping into the carriage would change the whole course of my views, and would discover the secrets which in my then situation I should never have thought of prying into."

[1] See *Life of Zachary Macaulay*, by Viscountess Knutsford. 1900.

It appears that Zachary, after the leave-taking was over, caught sight of Miss Mills downstairs, as he was passing to his carriage; she was weeping bitterly, having been excluded from the leave-taking in the drawing-room by the judicious Misses More. Here she was, all alone and sobbing her heart out at the thought that the man who had stolen her love was off to Africa for three years, and that she might not even bid him farewell. Meeting thus accidentally, the two lovers soon made it up, then and there, and Zachary stepped into his carriage an engaged man. His friends all noticed how much happier and brighter he looked after this event, and he never had any doubt afterwards but that Providence had specially brought about that unexpected meeting, that they might know each other's minds before their long separation took place.

In his stormy interview with the sisters, Zachary, as he afterwards confessed, quite lost his temper, and wickedly expressed his surprise that such worthy women should have failed to find husbands. In a letter to Selina a little later he wrote that, although he had no wish to lessen the obligations they were both under to the Misses More, he thought them outrageously violent on several points, especially in their opinion as to the effect of marriage in narrowing the heart, and hardening it against the impressions of former friendships, and thence drawing conclusions hostile to marriage. He even intimated that it is the unmarried who are as a rule the most opposed to marriage, and cited as an example the monks of the Roman Catholic Church.

It is clear that some one or more of the sisters must have merited his reproach, but here we repeat what we have said, that Hannah More's whole life gives the lie, and gives it emphatically, to the insinuation that she could have been personally to blame in this affair.

As it was, the story ended most happily. On his return from Africa three years later, Zachary was

married to Selina Mills at Bristol on August 20, 1799, and their marriage interfered in no way with the friendly feeling between the Misses More and the young couple. Zachary Macaulay had a family of nine children, the eldest of whom, Master Tommy, born in 1800, was a particular favourite with Hannah More. Mrs. Macaulay regularly took her children for a visit to Barley Wood every summer for a number of years, and the sisters, now most of them on the sunny side of sixty, loved to have the little ones about them. "Master Tommy," who was destined to be known to all future ages as Lord Macaulay the historian, and what is more, the author of India's Penal Code, often spent his holidays at Barley Wood. We read that Mrs. Hannah often kept the little boy with her for weeks listening to him as he read prose by the ell and declaimed the poetry he so quickly committed to memory. . . . She would discuss and compare with him his favourite heroes, ancient and modern and fictitious, under all points of view and under every condition, and coax him into the garden under pretence of a lesson on botany, sending him from his books to run round the grounds, or play at cooking in the kitchen; giving him Bible lessons which invariably ended in a theological argument, and following him with advice and sympathy through his many literary enterprises.

Hannah More had brought about the match, directly or indirectly, between his parents, for but for her they would never have met, and she it evidently was who smoothed away all the difficulties that arose and threatened to prevent the marriage. The most striking qualities in the character of Lord Macaulay's mother are said to have been humility and sincerity, the two ingredients that Hannah considered the most important in a woman's character; some have thought that Selina Mills was the model from which she drew her picture of Lucilla, the destined wife of Cœlebs, and

certainly, as Lord Macaulay's biographer has observed, Zachary Macaulay was a young man approaching as near to Hannah's ideal of what a young man should be as she could be likely to meet with. That the eldest child of such a marriage, with such a guardian angel as Hannah More during his tenderest and most impressionable years, should grow up into an honest English gentleman, a brilliant conversationalist and great reader, a profound thinker, and in short a Lord Macaulay, is a fact which has its peculiar interest for the student of eugenics.

An amusing story is told of how Hannah, when on one of her frequent visits to the Macaulays' house at Clapham, was once met at the door by their pretty little boy of four, who politely informed her that his parents were out, but that if she would come in he would give her a glass of old spirits. When asked why he had offered spirits to his guest, the child replied that Robinson Crusoe always had some.

In one of her letters to the Macaulays while their boy was with her at Barley Wood Hannah wrote: "Tom has ingratiated himself with Mrs. Betty by his fondness for making bread and pastry with his sleeves tucked up and a white apron, and she says: 'Who would think that he knew so much about Virgil!'"

One of Mrs. Macaulay's daughters was named "Hannah More Macaulay" at Hannah's express wish, and became her godchild. This was the sister who accompanied Macaulay to India and eventually married Sir George Trevelyan in 1834. When Tom began to grow up Hannah was his constant correspondent, and as his nephew and biographer says, "to her was due the commencement of what eventually became the most readable of libraries." When he was only six years old she wrote to him, "Though you are a little boy now, you will one day, if it please God, be a man, but long before you are a man I hope you will be a scholar. I therefore wish you to purchase such books as will be

useful and agreeable to you *then*, and that you will employ this little sum in laying a little corner-stone for your future library." Two years later she thanks him for "two letters so free from blots. By this obvious improvement you have entitled yourself to another book. You must go to Hatchard's and choose. I think we have nearly exhausted the epics, what say you to a little good prose, Johnson's *Hebrides*, or Walton's *Lives*, unless you would like a neat edition of Cowper's poems, or *Paradise Lost*, for your own eating. In any case, choose something you do not possess. I want you to become a complete Frenchman that I may give you the works of Racine, the only dramatic poet that I know, in any modern language, that is perfectly pure and good." [1]

Happy indeed the boy who had such a friend and counsellor!

A few years after Hannah More's death there seems to have been a suggestion that Macaulay would write a review of her life and writings, just as there had been a rumour that Hannah More had been going to publish a memoir of her old friend David Garrick, but in neither case would such an undertaking have been a wise one. In both instances the shoot had grown up too near the old tree that shaded it to be in a position to criticise justly and without prejudice. Macaulay himself felt this, for in a letter to his friend Napier in 1837 he said: "I never, to the best of my recollection, proposed to review Hannah More's life and works. If I did it must have been in jest. She was exactly the very last person in the world about whom I should wish to write a critique. She was a very kind friend to me from my childhood. Her notice first called out my literary tastes. Her

[1] It is from Macaulay's little sisters that Hannah More is supposed to have drawn her picture of Mrs. Stanley's younger children (*Cælebs*), and the scene in the garden where they have the discussion on story-books is said to be partly from life.

presents laid the foundation of my library. She was to me what Ninon was to Voltaire—begging her pardon for comparing her to a bad woman, and yours for comparing myself to a great man. She really was a second mother to me. I have a real affection for her memory. I therefore could not possibly write about her, unless I wrote in her praise, and the praise which I could give to her writings, even after straining my conscience in her favour, would be far indeed from satisfying any of her admirers."

We must remember that Hannah More's friends, in 1837, were almost exclusively members of that Low Church, Evangelical party, whom so many writers have confounded with the Methodists. They were a party with which Macaulay had little in common, though his parents belonged to it, and from which he had long separated himself when he wrote the above-quoted letter. If at this period, in his thirty-eighth year, he could have met Hannah More as she was in her younger days, say when she was between thirty and forty, how she would have fascinated him. What a fine couple they would have made! Both of them brilliant conversationalists, both passionately fond of reading and of everything connected with literature, both full of literary ambition, both of them poets, both of them clever letter-writers, and both brimming over with enthusiasm for all that was great and good.

During her later years, by devoting her pen wholly to the cause of religion, Hannah More had become what one of her friends called her, "an eminent divine," and her writings, had she been a Bishop, would have been some of the finest sermons that ever appeared in book form. As it is, her *Practical Piety*, published in 1811; the *Christian Morals*, in 1812; and her *Moral Sketches*, in 1818, at the age of seventy-five, as well as her *Essay on the Writings of St. Paul* (1817), had they issued from the pen of the greatest Evangelical divine of the eighteenth

century, would have done everlasting honour to his name. But none of these were in Macaulay's line, and we may safely assume that he never even looked into one of them; when the last of these works appeared he was but a youth of eighteen.

Yet even with all the differences of religious opinion that existed between Macaulay as a young man and Hannah More as an old woman, it is remarkable how their views on all that is generally considered to be most essential in Christianity coincided, and how their written opinions of many contemporary writers tallied with one another. Take, for instance, Macaulay's words on Gibbon, and compare them with those of Hannah More in letters to her friends, both in Gibbon's lifetime and after his death. Macaulay observed: "He writes like a man who has received some personal injury from Christianity, and wished to be revenged on it and all its professors."[1]

Just as Hannah More, her purpose once fixed, readily gave up all that the world held out to her, all its social pleasure and all its friendships, that she might devote herself solely to the object she had set before her, so Macaulay also was ready when the time came to make a similar sacrifice, that he might leave behind him a work worthy to enrich the literature of his country. "To sacrifice the accessory to the principle; to plan an extensive and arduous task, and to pursue it without remission, and without misgiving; to withstand readily all counter-attractions, whether they come in the shape of distracting pleasures, or competing duties; such are the indispensable conditions for attaining to that high and sustained excellence of artistic performance which, in the beautiful words of George Eliot, 'must be wooed with industrious

[1] Macaulay's remarks on Thucydides, Herodotus, Livy, &c., in his letters to Napier and elsewhere, are astonishingly like those made by Hannah More in her *Hints to a Princess*, and one among the many proofs we possess of their similarity of views upon such subjects.

thought, and patient renunciation of small desires.'"[1] Such is the prerogative of a character like that of Hannah More or Lord Macaulay. Had Hannah More made literature her object, as was the case with Macaulay, none can tell the heights she would have scaled, but literature with her was itself made only a means with which to accomplish her end.

[1] See *Life of Lord Macaulay*, vol. ii. This was said of Macaulay by one who knew him well.

CHAPTER XXIX

"VIVRE, C'EST VIEILLIR"

THE story of Hannah More's declining years, of the books she wrote, and of the friends who visited her at Barley Wood, and corresponded with her from every part of the globe, would fill a large volume, but we can only touch upon it here.

The first book that she published under her own name was entitled *Practical Piety*. The first edition, which appeared in 1811, a year after *Cœlebs*, was sold out before it had issued from the press, and she wrote to a friend that she had not a copy to show to her sisters. Her next book, *Christian Morals*, followed in 1812, and of it also the first edition was bespoken as soon as it was announced. Many persons who were absolute strangers to her now began writing to tell her how much help they had derived from these two books, and it was the opinion of many, including Sir William Pepys, that *Practical Piety* was the best thing she ever wrote. Yet it raised objections, as she had foretold it would, both from the Calvinists and from the Catholic Anglican party. This being the first of the books that she devoted solely to religion, she felt it necessary to state in the preface that, like an eminent professor of her time, who said that he taught chemistry in order to learn it, she now taught religion with the same object.

We would strongly recommend all these later works from the pen of our authoress to those divines who on the Saturday night are lamenting that they have no sermon ready for their Sunday morning congregation. Here they will find rich mines of religious thought, deep

and beautiful thoughts expressed with that "sweet reasonableness" peculiar to this sainted lady. We would especially commend to their notice her *Essay on the Writings of St. Paul*, a volume that would prove invaluable also to invalids and persons prevented from themselves attending divine service. This essay is divided into short and easy paragraphs, and after a careful and thorough reading of it we do not hesitate to say that there is not a sentence in it, not a phrase, that does not clothe some beautiful thought. It is marvellous indeed that such a book should ever sink into oblivion. We are sorry to add that it is at present almost unattainable, and that even the London Library, in St. James's Square, does not possess a copy.

In the year 1811 a lady of high social position was heard to remark before a large company that Hannah More's new book would cause a revolution in the country. Some one present asked her why she thought so.

"Why!" she replied. "By letting the poor know that the great have faults!"

In 1814 we find Hannah reading Madame de Staël's *L'Allemagne*, and she writes of it to Wilberforce: "Her religion appears to me of a questionable sort, or rather a nonentity. She seems to admire its mysteries in common with those of freemasonry; all in a tone of veneration. Its sublimities rank with those of literature, poetry, and the fine arts."

In 1815 Miss Jane Porter, the author of *Scottish Chiefs*, wrote to her: "Your pen addressed the young, the old, the high, the low; and most happily your former literary fame was a bright forerunner to your promulgation of the gospel. It made it fashionable to read your works—nay, by that word they passed into all hands."

When Hannah More had nearly completed her *Essay on the Writings of St. Paul*, she met with a dangerous accident. Stretching out her arm across the fireplace to take down a book, her shawl caught fire. When her

screams attracted the other members of the family, they found her at the head of the stairs enveloped in flames. She would certainly have been burnt to death but for her own presence of mind and that of her friends. As it was, although she was wrapped on that particular day in three shawls, and had on a thick stuff dress, that garment was itself almost a tinder before they could get it off her.

More than forty years after the first appearance of her *Sacred Dramas* her publisher wrote to tell her that she had outlived the copyright, and that as other persons were bringing out editions, he would be glad if she could add a scene to one of the *Dramas*, and so prove to readers that his was the authentic version. This she at once did, setting aside her *St. Paul* that she might comply with his request.

Hannah More had taken a keen interest in the efforts of her friends to establish the now so well-known and revered Bible Society, and in a letter to her old friend Mrs. Kennicott in 1813, she wrote: "I long to know whether you have been able to establish your Bible Society in the teeth of so much opposition." After the Society had begun to make its way Hannah and her sisters established a branch Bible Society at Wrington, the parish to which Barley Wood belonged, and on the occasion of its anniversaries she would entertain large parties of friends from far and near. Of the gathering in 1816 she wrote to Wilberforce: "We had near forty clergymen of the Establishment, so that even Archdeacon —— cannot plant us in his hot-bed of heresy and schism. When the meeting was over, which was held in a waggon-yard, as there was no room for them at the inn, all the superior part of the company resorted, by previous invitation, to Barley Wood. A hundred and one sat down to dinner, and about one hundred and sixty to tea. "Happily it was a fine day, and about fifty dined under the trees—the overflowings from our small house. . . . Some may think that it would be better to add £20

to our subscription, and save ourselves so much trouble; but we take this trouble from a conviction of the contrary. The many young persons of fortune present, by assisting at this little festivity, will learn to connect the idea of innocent cheerfulness with that of religious societies, and may 'go and do likewise.' For no other cause on earth would we encounter the fatigue."

The three elder sisters, after fifty years of a happy and united sisterhood, now passed away one after the other, and very soon Hannah and her youngest sister, Martha, found themselves the only members of their family left at Barley Wood.

Among the visitors to Barley Wood in the year 1817 we find the names of Dr. Chalmers, of Dr. Paterson, the Northern Bible Missionary, and other well-known contemporaries. Her Tracts were being read with enthusiasm in Russia, in Sweden, while even in Iceland some one was found reading a copy of *Cœlebs*. In 1818 Sir Alexander Johnstone, the Chief Justice of Ceylon, was in correspondence with Hannah More about the translation of her *Sacred Dramas* into Cingalese and Tamil. Through the efforts of the Chief Justice it had been brought about that from the year 1816 all children of Cingalese slaves belonging to Dutch masters born after the 12th of August that year should be considered as free, and should be maintained and educated by the masters of their parents till the age of fourteen. Sir Alexander instituted an annual festivity to be held every year on the anniversary of this date, and had the *Sacred Dramas* translated into Cingalese, that they might be performed on these occasions. Hannah More wrote a little poem on purpose for these festivities, entitled *The Feast of Freedom*. It was set to music by Charles Wesley, and Hannah's letter thanking him, dated November 20, 1827, is among those preserved by her biographer.

In the year 1820 Hannah More had received from Paris a volume of her *Cheap Repository Tracts*, translated

into French under the auspices of the Countess of Pastoret and the Duchess of Broglie; the third edition was then in the press.

About the same time she received from America a handsome edition of her complete works; and wrote to Sir W. Pepys on December 23, 1820: "I have much intercourse with that continent; I have had visits from several who have been making the tour of Europe for improvement; and I have had letters from many, which discover cultivated minds. I am glad to have my prejudices against that large republic softened. They are imitating all our religious and charitable institutions. They are fast acquiring taste; which, I think, is the last quality that republicans do acquire."

Huber had translated *Cœlebs* into French, and Madame de Staël had given it a favourable review in the *Constitutionnel* in spite of the fact that Hannah More had criticised her with great candour in her *Essay on the Writings of St. Paul.*

In a letter to Hart Davis, Esq., on October 16, 1821, Hannah More tells how Sir Thomas D. Acland, against her most earnest remonstrances and positive refusals, "has actually sent down Pickersgill to paint my picture. He is staying in the house, and keeps me so close to the miserable work of sitting, that it was with difficulty I stole time for the enclosed letter. . . ." In the same letter she mentions that she has been sitting for another portrait at the request of her friend Mr. Lovell Gwatkin, and that each of the gentlemen likes his own portrait best. She adds: "I believe the painter has made the best of my withered visage."

On hearing of the death of her old friend Mrs. Garrick, Hannah More wrote to a friend on October 21, 1822: "I was much affected yesterday with a report of the death of my ancient and valued friend Mrs. Garrick. She was in her hundredth year! I spent above twenty winters under her roof, and gratefully remember not

only their personal kindness, but my first introduction through them into a society remarkable for rank, literature, and talents. Whatever was most distinguished in either was to be found at their table. He was the very soul of conversation."

Hannah More lived thirteen years after Pickersgill had painted her portrait. So strongly did she object to having it done at all that she said she would willingly pay the artist for his time if he would let her off.

Bishop Porteus had once remarked that whenever he heard of Hannah's having a new illness he began to look out for another book from her pen. Indeed her frequent indispositions never seemed to have the slightest ill effect upon her mental powers, and her biographer observes that it was not until the sickness that overtook her in her eighty-ninth year that her mind was ever observed to lose strength. In one of her conversations with a friend towards the close of her life she said that repose and quiet had been the blessings she had most longed for during the greater part of her life. To one of her friends she mentioned the fact of John Wesley's having once said to her sister, "Tell her to live in the world : *there* is the sphere of her usefulness."

She used to say that it was to her old friend Sir James Stonehouse that she owed her first serious impressions, and would repeat how he had once told her that in the days of his miserable infidelity he was so mad against God, that when travelling abroad as a young man, he took pains to converse as much as possible with the French postilions, that they might teach him some new methods of swearing.

When Hannah More's last remaining sister, Martha, was taken from her, she was not left alone, for her friend Miss Frowde came to live with her at Barley Wood, and proved a most excellent companion. In 1824 she published her last book, *The Spirit of Prayer*, and six thousand copies were sold within a year.

In June 1825 she lost her old friend Sir W. Pepys, and a few days later she wrote to Lady Olivia Sparrow: "Our acquaintance began near fifty years ago; he was the Lælius in my little poem, *The Bas Bleu*. As he was the chief ornament, so he was the last survivor of the select society which gave birth to that trifle. The scholar and the polished gentleman were united in him."

In a letter to Mrs. Huber in August 1825, Hannah More wrote: "It is a singular satisfaction to me that I have lived to see such an increase of genuine religion among the higher classes of society. Mr. Wilberforce and I agree that where we knew one instance thirty years ago, there are now a dozen or more. 'It is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.'"

In this year (1825) a dispute arose among the members of the Bible Society on the question as to whether the Bibles distributed to Roman Catholics should include the Apocrypha or not, and Hannah More wrote to the Rev. D. Wilson, that the thought "of this schism afflicted her by day and kept her awake at night. My two quarto Bibles, printed at our two universities, have both the Apocrypha; but who ever thought of reading it?

> "'Perhaps to be forbid may tempt one
> To wish for what one never dreamt on.'

"I wish these rhymes did not put themselves in my way, but what can I do? I heartily wish the Apocrypha was out of every Bible; but if the papists will not take a Bible without it, is there any comparison between having a Bible with it and having *no Bible at all?*"

In the year 1828, when Hannah More was in her eighty-fourth year, a rumour was spread among her friends that the servants of her household were behaving in a most abominable manner, by trading on the old lady's kindness, and robbing her right and left. At last

her old friend Zachary Macaulay received such alarming reports not only of their dishonesty, but also of their immorality, that he wrote very seriously to Hannah More on the necessity of putting a stop to her servants' evil doings.

Her eyes once opened to the real state of things, Hannah More quickly decided to rectify matters by dismissing all her domestics at once, giving up Barley Wood, and moving to a smaller home in Clifton. Her eldest sister, Mary, had been the business woman among the five sisters, and Betty had been the housekeeper. When Hannah was left to manage her own household she was an old woman, and it was difficult for her to learn to do those things from which throughout her life she had been spared by her practical sisters. She had confided too much in the integrity of her servants, and they had repaid her confidence by robbing her to such an extent that she was obliged to draw from her capital to set matters once more on a proper footing.

On the day appointed for her to leave Barley Wood, Zachary Macaulay and several of her Bristol friends came out to escort her. For weeks she had not left her room. They waited for her at the door, conducted her downstairs, and protected her from any incident that might trouble her. She came down with a placid countenance, walked silently for a few minutes round the lower room, the walls of which were covered with the portraits of all her old and dear friends who had successively gone before her, and as she was helped into the carriage, she cast one last look upon her garden, saying: "I am driven like Eve out of Paradise; but not, like Eve, by angels."

Mr. Cottle, the publisher of Coleridge and Southey, whose sisters had been educated at the Misses More's school, has given an amusing picture of the behaviour of Hannah More's servants, and of their "high life below stairs," of their hot suppers in the servants' hall, where the table was laid with parlour-like elegance, and

of all their plans to avoid any sound that might attract the attention of their aged mistress or her companion. They took care that "the family" should have retired to bed before their orgies began. And as no noise could be permitted, dancing was prohibited at these entertainments. These servants also accepted invitations to entertainment given by other people's servants in like manner; and on a certain night on which they were going out to supper, Hannah More, having been warned of their intention by a kitchenmaid whom they had offended, set herself at her window at a time when she was thought to be asleep in her bed and there she saw her whole batch of domestics march forth, two and two, the ladies on the arms of the gentlemen, to partake of the hospitality of some one else's servants. Thus they were caught at last.

The old lady settled down very comfortably in her new home in Windsor Terrace, Clifton, and there she was visited by troops of devoted friends as long as her strength was sufficient to receive them. Callers were admitted from one till three o'clock; Miss Frowde calculated that in one week she saw as many as eighty different people. But at length she was obliged to restrict her visitors to two days a week. In one of her playful moments she drew up a list of some of her most intimate friends and headed it—

"*Sketch of my court at Windsor,* 1828.

"The Duke of Gloucester, Sir Thomas Acland, Sir Edmund Hartopp, Mr. Hartford—my sportsmen. Mr. Battersby, Mr. Piggott, and Mrs. Addington—my fruiterers. Mrs. Walker Gray—my confectioner. Mr. Edward Bryce—my fishmonger. Dr. Carrick—my state physician and zealous friend. Mrs. La Touch—my silk mercer and clothier. Bishop of Salisbury—my oculist. Miss Roberts's—my councillors and solicitors; for they give more than they take. . . ."

Barley Wood [1] was now sold to William Hartford, Esq., the brother of her friend at Blaize Castle, and a little later she sold the copyright of the last portion of her works, which consisted of ten volumes. Their sale had continued so steadily as to afford a regular increase to her income, and as she was no longer being robbed by her servants, she was able to spend large sums on charities, and to do a great deal of good. So generous indeed was she at this time with her money that a report was set on foot to the effect that her own extravagances had necessitated her leaving her old home! This report originated, doubtless, among the servants she had so abruptly dismissed.

A piece of news which gave Hannah More great pleasure in her declining years was the information sent her from America that her *Hints towards the Education of a Princess*, the only one of her works that had been excluded from publication in the United States, on account of the objections of the Americans to everything connected with royalty, had at length been adopted throughout the length and breadth of that great country as a useful work on the science of education. When this fact was made known to her, Hannah More exclaimed, "I have conquered America!"

Soon after her removal to Clifton, Hannah More's memory, that had done her such good and lasting service, gradually began to fail her, and it was clear to her friends that her life was nearly over; yet though often unfit to receive visitors, she was loth to refuse them up to the very last. She lived on for another five years and a half, and it was not till September 7, 1833, that her long life reached its close, though for some time previously her earnest wish to depart and be at peace had almost amounted to a prayer. It is reported that during her last sickness she said to her friend and nurse, "My dear,

[1] Though much altered, the house is still standing, and inhabited (1911) by a brother of the late Lord Winterstoke.

do people never die?" The last word she uttered as her spirit passed away was "Joy."

On September 13, 1833, her remains were laid to rest at Wrington. In accordance with her express wish, there was no pomp or display at the funeral, and only the suits of mourning given to fifteen old men whom she had herself selected. But all Bristol was anxious to show its respect for the departed lady. There was not a church that did not toll its bell as the procession passed along the streets. All the gentlemen of the neighbourhood met the procession about a mile from the church, and the road to Wrington was thronged with country people, most of them in mourning. The coffin was preceded by two hundred school children and a large body of the clergy.

Hannah More's estate amounted to £30,000, and most of this she left to charities, as she had outlived all her near relations.

About three years before her death Hannah More had received a kind letter from the Duchess of Kent, telling her that the Princess Victoria had for three years been in possession of her works, they having been put into her hands by the Bishop of Salisbury. The letter is given in her biography. It is interesting to know that our good Queen Victoria was not unacquainted with the works of the subject of this study.

CHAPTER XXX

CONCLUSION

We have now followed Hannah More through the changing scenes of her long and eventful life; we have accompanied her through her eighty-eight years of pilgrimage from the cradle to the grave, and we have noted how, from her tenderest years, it was her constant wish and endeavour to be of use to her fellow-creatures, and to leave the world, if possible, a degree better than she had found it. But we have said little about the great change that took place in her attitude towards the drama, the histrionic art, and theatre-going generally.

Her literary connection with the stage did not terminate suddenly, as some have supposed, with the death of her friend David Garrick, for it was after his death that her second play, *The Fatal Falsehood*, was produced at Covent Garden. The first intimation we receive that she has abandoned writing for the stage and attending the theatre is in her letters to her sisters, in which she tells them of the hearty reception that is being given by the public to the second run of *Percy*, in 1789, in which Mrs. Siddons is taking the part of Elwina, and that she has no wish to see it herself, and has refused to go. But there is no word in any of her letters to the effect that she had grown to think play-going wrong in itself,

We know, however, that by that time she had already become the friend of the Rev. John Newton, of Mr. Thornton, and of Wilberforce, and many other members of what came to be called the Clapham party, and that all of these new friends were agreed that it was better for a Christian to have nothing to do with the theatre. In his

book on *Practical Christianity*, published in 1797, Wilberforce uses as his strongest argument against playgoing, the fact that the theatre is always a popular resort for the worst type of profligate. He is convinced that an amusement that is so attractive to the professed enemies of Christianity is not one in which a Christian can indulge with impunity.

Hannah More had never loved the theatre for its own sake; she had hoped at the beginning of her literary career that the stage, under certain regulations, might be converted into a school of morals, and that though a bad play would always be a bad thing, yet the representation of a good one might become not only harmless but useful. She imagined that, with the aid of a correct judgment and a critical selection, "a pernicious pleasure" might be turned into a profitable entertainment. Hannah More tells us herself in her preface to the edition of her tragedies published in her old age that she had certainly hoped at one time that she might write for the stage such pieces as, whatever their other faults might be, would themselves be entirely on the side of modesty and virtue, "and which should neither hold out any corrupt image to the mind, nor any impure description to the fancy." Even in this preface, in which she candidly expresses her altered views, Hannah More admits readily that a well-written tragedy may be one of the noblest efforts of the human mind; neither does she deny that of all public amusements the stage is the most interesting and the most intellectual. She owns at once that it is the pleasure of all pleasures the most accommodated to the tastes and capacities of a rational being, that it is, indeed, almost the only public pleasure which has mind for its object, "the only one which has the combined advantage of addressing itself to the imagination, the judgment, and the heart; that it is the only public diversion which calls out the higher energies of the understanding in the composition, and awakens the

most lively and natural feelings of the heart in the representation." She then goes on to express her conviction that this Utopian good which she had once hoped to produce cannot be brought about until not only the stage itself has undergone a complete purification, but until the audience shall be purified also. She has come to the conclusion that we must first suppose a state of society in which the spectators will be disposed to relish all that is pure, and to reprobate all that is corrupt, before the system of a pure and uncorrupt theatre can be adopted with any reasonable hope of success. "There must always be a congruity between the taste of the spectator and the nature of the spectacle, in order to affect that point of union which can produce pleasure; for it must be remembered that people go to a play, not to be instructed, but to be pleased." She is quite sure that if the passions exhibited were no longer accommodated to the sentiments and passions of the audience, the theatre would very soon be empty; people would not go to an amusement that was both vapid and inappropriate. She tells her readers that she has never read any of those treatises that pious divines have written against the stage, and against the evil tendencies of theatrical entertainments. Her conviction is purely the result of her own experience and observation. She knows well that David Garrick did much towards the purification of the stage, but she also knows that since his death the ground gained has not been kept. She has nothing to say about the objections that some good people have based on the immoral lives of some actors and actresses, but asks her readers whether they can honestly feel that the theatre is an amusement entirely compatible with the Christian's avowed character. The more scrupulous Christian is not one who will allow himself to think that of two evils either may be chosen—that he may choose the theatre because it is a superior form of amusement to some other that happens to attract

him. "*His* amusements must be blameless as well as ingenious; safe as well as rational; moral as well as intellectual. They must have nothing in them which may be likely to excite any of the tempers which it is his daily task to subdue, any of the passions which it is his constant business to keep in order. . . . A religious person who occasionally indulges in an amusement not consonant to his general views and pursuits, inconceivably increases his own difficulties by whetting tastes and exciting appetites which it will cut him out so much work to counteract, as will greatly overbalance, in a conscientious mind, the short and trivial enjoyment." The Christian, in her opinion, who goes sometimes to the theatre, sanctions a diversion which "is not to be defended on strict Christian principles." Her point is that there will still remain, even in the best of tragedies, that are sufficiently impassioned as to produce a powerful effect upon the feelings, and have spirit enough to deserve to become popular—there will still remain one radical defect; there will always run through them a thread of false principle. "It is generally the leading object of the poet to erect a standard of honour, one that is in direct opposition to the standard of Christianity." Worldly honour is the very soul, and spirit, and life-giving principle of the drama. "Honour is the religion of tragedy, her moral and political law; her dictates form its institutes; fear and shame are the capital crimes in her code. Injured honour can only be vindicated at the point of the sword; the stains of injured reputation can only be washed out in blood. Love, jealousy, hatred, ambition, pride, revenge, are too often elevated into the rank of splendid virtues, and form a dazzling system of worldly morality, in direct contradiction to the spirit of that religion whose characteristics are "charity, meekness, peaceableness, long-suffering, gentleness, forgiveness." "The fruits of the spirit and the fruits of the stage, if the parallel were

followed up, as it might easily be, would perhaps exhibit as pointed a contrast as human imagination could conceive." Hannah More has much to say about the way in which the good taught to the young in church on a Sunday may be counteracted each day in the week by the teaching of the stage. She points out the power of beauty on the stage. "Beauty is to a stage hero that restraining or impelling power which law or conscience or Scripture is to other men. . . . The drowsy moral antidote at the close slowly attempts to creep after the poison of the piece; but it creeps in vain; it can never expel that which it can never reach; for one stroke of feeling, one natural expression of the passions, be that principle right or wrong, carries away the affection of the auditor beyond any of the poet's force of reasoning to control; . . . The effect of the smooth moral is instantly obliterated, while that of the indented passion is perhaps indelible."

The evil affects of play-going on young girls is the next part of the question which occupies our moralist's attention. Love being the grand business of plays, the young lady who frequents them "will be liable to nourish a feeling which is often strong enough of itself without this constant supply of foreign fuel, namely, that love is the grand business of life also. If the passion be avowedly illicit, her well-instructed conscience will arm her with scruples, and her sense of decorum will set her on her guard. . . . While, on the other hand, the greater the purity with which the passion is exhibited, the more deep and irresistible will be its effect on a tender and inexperienced heart; nay, the more likely will the passion acted on the stage be to excite a corresponding passion. . . . If she have not yet felt the passion she sees so finely portrayed, she will wish to feel it, and the not having felt it she will consider as something wanting to the perfection of her nature. . . ."

"This may be all very true about young girls," the

reader will say, "but surely you would not exclude older persons from the delights of a Shakespeare play?"

Her answer here is that for the Christian it is better to read Shakespeare than to see his plays acted on the stage. "I think there is a substantial difference between seeing and reading a dramatic composition," she writes; "and that the objections which lie so strongly against the one are not, at least in the same degree, applicable to the other. . . . The danger of reading a play arises solely from the improper sentiments contained in it."

"What is it," she asks, "that chiefly draws the multitude? It is the semblance of real action which is given to the piece by different persons supporting the different parts, and by their dresses, their tones, their gestures, heightening the representation into a kind of enchantment. It is this concomitant pageantry, it is the splendour of the spectacle, and even the show of the spectators." All these things give a pernicious force to sentiments which, when read, merely explain the mysterious action of the human heart, but which, when thus uttered, and thus accompanied, become contagious and destructive. These, in short, make up a scene of temptation, and seduction, of over-wrought voluptuousness and unnerving pleasure."

Hannah More was of the opinion that it was a very good thing for young girls to read Shakespeare (selected). "Women especially," she writes, "whose walk in life is so circumscribed, and whose avenues of information are so few, may learn to know the world with less danger, and to study human nature with more advantage from the perusal of Shakespeare than from most other attainable sources."

Hannah More concludes her remarks on the drama with the following paragraph:—

"The stage is by universal concurrence allowed to be no indifferent thing. The impressions it makes on the mind are deep and strong; deeper and stronger,

perhaps, than are made by any other amusement. If, then, such impressions be in general hostile to Christianity, the whole resolves itself into this short question—Should a Christian frequent it ? "

These are the last words that Hannah More had to say on the subject of theatre-going. Coming as they do from a writer who was at one period of her career universally acknowledged to be London's most successful tragedian, from one who, at that very period, when the whole world seemed to lie at her feet, resolutely abandoned the art for which she was so exceptionally gifted, and to which she was so strongly attracted, they must have a special interest for the student of psychology. Though published for the first time when she was an old woman, their views are the very same that she was ready to give to the world before she had attained her fortieth birthday, and while London was still ringing with her name.

Another interest that these words have for us lies in the fact that they are opinions and convictions which were shared by many other eminent persons of Hannah More's generation. They were the convictions of the founders of the Bible Society, of the Abolitionists, and of many of the most eminent divines of the early decades of the nineteenth century. They were almost a tenet in the faith of the Low Church Evangelical party—the party which Lecky has bracketed with the Methodists of that day, and which, as a matter of fact, had sprung from the same root. The Wesleys, John Newton, Cowper, Wilberforce, Zachary Macaulay, and Hannah More are all closely connected with the early days of both.

It is not our object in this volume either to enforce or to approve of every sentiment expressed by Hannah More in her didactic writings. We have taken them, along with the life of their writer, as the best obtainable material from which a true portrait of the woman herself

can be painted. Hannah More poured her very self into her poetry and her books, and it is to find her that we turn to them.

There were many good people, nay, earnest Christians, who, even in her own day, were grievously disappointed in the remarkable change that had come over Hannah More. There were many who held strongly to the opinion that in abandoning the drama she was abandoning the greatest opportunity that Heaven had put in her way for influencing for good, for purifying, the world in which she had been placed. There were many who, while they saw, as she saw, the dangers of the stage, and the fearful responsibility that rested with the writer of plays, were still of the opinion that a writer entrusted with such a power for good as Hannah More, was incurring a still greater responsibility by abandoning the opportunity for reform that had been given to her by Providence. They felt that, however justly Christians might declaim against the stage, however scrupulously they might shun it, the stage would still be there, would still be one of the greatest forces in the world for good or for evil; and, if abandoned by those dramatists who alone could raise its tone effectually, they were convinced it would certainly become a yet greater snare to the youth of our country, and a far more serious danger to the morals of the public.

The clergyman whose church at Wrington Hannah More had attended for many years published a little book about her some five years after her decease, and in it he observed: "It is impossible not to regret that, instead of condemning the stage as irreclaimable, she did not apply the high advantages which she possessed to such an object as the purification and the improvement of the national drama, the character of which it is very possible her preface to her tragedies, though most unintentionally, has concurred with other causes to deteriorate." He then goes on to point out that she

had already done good by her dramas, and might have done much more.

There is, indeed, no question that her early effort, *The Search after Happiness*, whatever its faults, supplied a real and much-felt want in the young ladies' schools of her day, and the same may be said of her *Sacred Dramas*, which were not only privately acted in schools, but, as we have seen, were translated into the Cingalese language and acted by and for the benefit of Christian natives in that island. Her *Percy*, acted in London and Vienna, and for which she was honoured with membership of the *Académie Française* and the Rouen Academy, certainly did good, if only by keeping the place that would otherwise have been filled by plays of a less elevating character.

Thompson relates how a Calvinist friend, on finding Hannah More engaged in reading Shakespeare, exclaimed, "No book for me but the book of Christ!"

"We cannot all be as moral as you!" was Hannah's instant reply.

There is probably a good deal of truth in Horace Walpole's remark that the Alexandrian library would have met with no better fate from the Christian devotee than it did from the Mohammedan Turk.

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